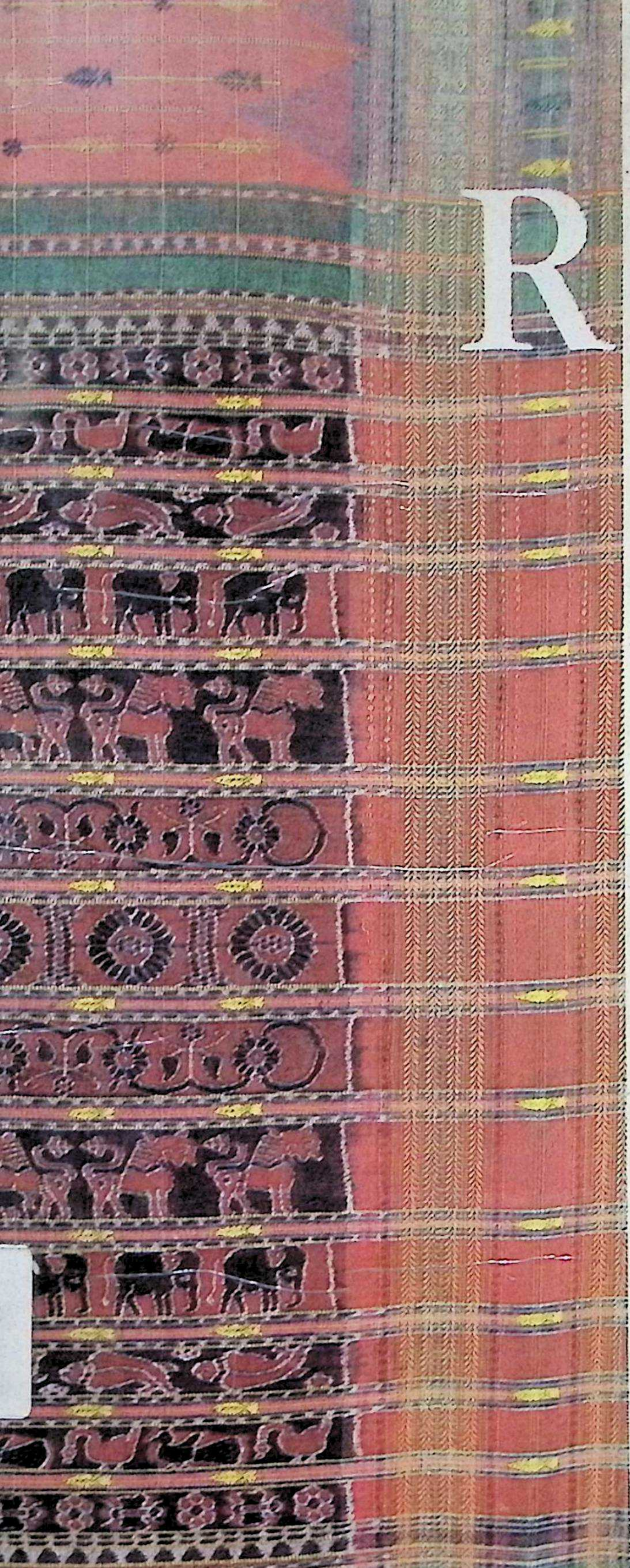


Religion and Society in Eastern India

Edited by

G.C. TRIPATHI
HERMANN KULKE

The volume contains a series of Memorial Lectures in honour of Dr. (Ms.) Anncharlott Eschmann who died in 1971 in India at the age of 35 while conducting research on the tribal background of the Jagannath Cult and on the Mahima Dharma movement of Orissa. As one of the founder members of the German Orissa Research Project and as Representative of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg in India she was able to establish her reputation as an internationally renowned scholar of Indology and Comparative Religions within the few years which had been left to her after completing her Ph.D. thesis on Aztec religion in 1970.

The Memorial Lectures were organised by the Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar and the Council of Cultural Relations, Cuttack. Three of them contain important contributions to conceptual frameworks of Indian culture and society those by Kapila Vatsyayana, Georg Pfeffer, Günther Sonthemier) whereas others pertain to a broad spectrum of subjects like Vedanta and Sufism (Roma Chaudhary), Science and Religion in India (Johannes Laping), Orissan Art (Thomas Donaldson) and the Idea of Purity in Hinduism (Gaya Charan Tripathi). Moreover the volume contains the English rendering of A. Eschmann's important German paper "Sign and Icon: Symbolism in Indian Religion".

Rs. 300

RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN EASTERN INDIA

RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN EASTERN INDIA

ESCHMANN MEMORIAL LECTURES

Edited by
G.C. Tripathi
Hermann Kulke

Published by
THE ESCHMANN MEMORIAL FUND
Bhubaneshwar
Distributed by
MANOHAR PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS
New Delhi

G.NO
1445

294.5
T737r

© G.C. Tripathi and Hermann Kulke
First Published 1994

Published by
THE ESCHMANN MEMORIAL FUND
Utkal University
Bani Bihar, Bhubaneshwar-4, Orissa

Printed at
Indian Press Pvt. Ltd., Pannalal Road,
Allahabad-2

PREFACE

It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that we present this collection of lectures held in the memory of Dr. (Ms.) Anncharlott Eschmann (1941-1977), an exceptionally promising young scholar of Indology and Comparative Religions from Heidelberg who died at the age of thirtyfive and a half at Delhi.

Within an academic life of ten years, her field of study stretched from Mexico to Israel to Orissa. She worked on the religious beliefs of American Indians, Christians, Jews, Hindus and tribal people and brilliantly illuminated many aspects of religions which had hitherto remained unnoticed or ignored. The lectures collected here touch a number of subjects in which Eschmann had a major interest and pertain mainly to the studies connected with Orissa or the adjoining regions of India.

The idea to initiate a series of Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Lectures was suggested for the first time by Dr. Radhanath Rath, Editor of *Samaj*, and by Sri Girija Patnaik at a memorial meeting held at the Council of Cultural Relations at Cuttack after Anncharlott Eschmann's death on 6.4.1977. On the occasion of her birthday on 24.9.1977 Prof. Prabhat Mukherjee delivered a lecture on "Theistic Religious Movements in Orissa" at an informal memorial meeting at the Max Müller Bhavan in Delhi. The first Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Lecture was delivered on 24.9.1978 by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan in the presence of Anncharlott's parents at Suchana Bhavan, Bhubaneshwar. On the occasion of this lecture which was introduced by Dr. Bidyadhar Mishra, the-then Vice-Chancellor of Utkal Univrsity, Hon'ble Sri Sukanta Kishore

Ray, Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, released the book *The Cult of Jagganatha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, co-edited by Anncharlott Eschmann. Dr. G.C. Tripathi and Dr. H. Kulke delivered talks on the life of Anncharlott Eschmann and highlighted her scholarly contribution to Orissan studies.

The volume contains lectures delivered between 1978 and 1987. The editors regret that the seventh Memorial Lecture, delivered by Prof. Surajit Sinha on 15.1.985 on "Myths, Symbols and Rituals connected with Pre-colonial State Formation in Tribal Regions of Eastern India", was not available for publication. We also crave the indulgence of our readers for the inconvenience that they shall face in reading the lecture of Dr. Tripathi which is included here in the form of an *addendum*.

The editors sincerely hope that the publication of this volume will help perpetuate the memory of Anncharlott Eschmann and would encourage research on the great religious traditions of India to which Anncharlott Eschmann had devoted her life.

—G.C. Tripathi, H. Kulke

WITH TEARS AND PRIDE

The newspapers carried a small photograph, followed by a couple of lines, Anncharlott Eschmann, the German daughter of the Oriya people was no more. She breathed her last in Delhi on 6-4-1977. She was struck by malaria while searching for the prototype of Jagannath in the forests of Ganjam District.

It wa a shock for many souls. The world lot a scholar who will be immortal in the annals of Orissa. Her mortal body passed away at the tender age of thirty-six and yet she will live on, thanks to her dedication to research.

In Jorandi Gadi tears rolled down the Mahima Dharma hermits, people who have renounced the world. The Adivasis of Koraput wailed in sorrow and pen of some scholars came to a halt, at least for a little while. Anncharlott had made Orissa her home. Tears came to my eyes when I came across her letters, filled with deep emotional attachment to Orissa, kept in the files of Eschmann Memorial Lectures.

Anncharlott died. There is a stanza in Oriya literature whose translation reads like this :

Your mortal body has been taken
away by the flames of cremation ground
But the famed body of yours will remain
immortal till the earth goes round.

Anncharlott lives. On the very day the news of her sudden demise reached Orissa, a memorial meeting was held at Cuttack under the auspices of Dr. Radhanath Rath, Editor, *Samaj* and President of the Council of Cultural Relations. During the meeting a suggestion was made to set up an Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Committee which was established in 1979 under the auspices of the Utkal University. As the General Secretary of the Council, I am happy to note that celebrated scholars from several countries have delivered Memorial Lectures on a subject close to her areas of research. We are gratified that the volume of those lectures is edited by her colleagues Dr. G.C. Tripathi and Dr. Hermann Kulke. They have jointly edited with Anncharlott Eschmann the *Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa.* In a world of vanishing remembrance it is a unique event that a Memorial Lecture was instituted in the name of a German girl, a foreigner and this alone speaks volumes of the impact she created amongst her friends and associates.

Her parents inspired in her love for India and Indology. As I write these lines, the picture of her parents flash upon my eyes. Anncharlott Eschmann was a dear friend of mine, of my family. She was part of it and all of us join in paying tribute to this great life that ended in such a small time.

GIRIJA BHUSHAN PATNAIK
General Secretary
Council of Cultural Relations, Cuttack
& Member, The Eschmann Memorial Committee

CONTENTS

HERMANN KULKE : In Memoriam Anncharlott Eschmann 1

G.C. TRIPATHI : Dr. Eschmann's Contribution to Orissan Studies 7

KAPILA VATSYAYANA : Sāstra and Prayoga : Mārga and Deśī; On conceptual Frameworks of Indian Culture 15

ROMA CHAUDHURY : Vedanta and Sufism : A Comparative Study (with special reference to Bengal) 49

GEORG PFEFFER : The Dualistic Culture of the Juang 103

GÜNTHER-DIETZ SONTHEIMER : The *Vana* and the *Kṣetra* : The Tribal Background of Some Famous Cults 117

JOHANNES LAPING : Science and Religion in Indian History 165

THOMAS DONALDSON : Sapta/Aṣṭa Mātṛkā Images in Orissa 189

Appendix

ANNCHARLOTT ESCHMANN : Sign and Icon: Symbolism in the Indian Folk Religion 211

Addendum

GAYA CHARAN TRIPATHI : The Idea of Purity and its Importance in Hinduism 237

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS by Anncharlott Eschmann 261

Anncharlott Eschmann

IN MEMORIAM ANNCHARLOTT ESCHMANN*

HERMANN KULKE

Anncharlott Eschmann was born in Munich on September 24th, 1941, today 37 years ago, as the first daughter of Professor Ernst Wilhelm Eschmann, a renowned author and Professor of Philosophy, and Mrs. Charlott Eschmann, née Behn, a member of an old Hanseatic family of Hamburg and now a Psychotherapist at Munich. After the war the family lived in Ticino, the southern Italian speaking part of Switzerland. Already these years of her childhood and early youth seem to have deeply influenced her. Born and educated as a Protestant Christian she grew up in Roman Catholic Ticino where her parents' house had become a constant meeting place of members of the Eranos society, a group of leading European scholars of Comparative Religion. It was thus the influence of her parents as well as the cultural environment in Ticino which, from her very early youth, made her extremely sensitive towards all questions of religion in a very direct way of general understanding.

When Anncharlott Eschmann was 16 years old, her family moved back to Munich where she continued her schooling at the famous Max Joseph Stift, a High School founded by the former Bavarian kings for the daughters of their civil servants. Her interest in philosophical and religious problems had increased considerably during these years because after finishing her High School in 1961, she began immediately her studies at the University of Munich, Marburg, Bonn and Heidelberg with the subjects Comparative Religion, Indology and Protestant Theology. Enormously gifted as a linguist, speaking, besides her mother tongue German, already French, Italian and English fluently, she now began to study Indian languages particularly Sanskrit as well as Hebrew and Aztec languages. She furthermore studied Spanish and ancient Greek and, as many of you remember, she spoke quite fluently Oriya and began to master Hindi during her stay in Delhi.

---

*First Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Meeting, Bhubaneswar. Sept. 24, 1978.

It was in the context of her Meso-American studies that she wrote her thesis on *The Idea of History in Aztec Religion* for which she was awarded the degree of Ph.D. in Comparative Religion by the University of Heidelberg in the year 1970. This thesis which was soon printed in an established series on American Studies at Berlin University, was of great interest also from a more general point of view. In it she very successfully challenged the established theory of Europe's monopoly of a linear concept of History.

But her interest in Religion never remained purely academic. It was, therefore, not a mere incident that in connection with her visit to an international conference in Jerusalem she came into contact with the Samaritans, a Jewish sect cut off from the main body of Jewism already in the 6th century B.C. and thereafter a common object of persecution by Jews as well as Christians and Muslims. It was partly through Anncharlott Eschmann's visit and the consequent deep interest she took in the repressed of this religious sect which led not only to a revival of their self-conciousness but also attracted international attention. Anncharlott Eschmann thereafter broadcast several lectures about them in Germany thanks to which the official Jewish attitude against the Samaritans changed soon to interest and even benevolence.

When Anncharlott Eschmann had completed her studies she was thus still deeply rooted in Europe, its religious sources and traditions. But she already had begun to build up a much broader view which was to bridge the West in its true sense, i. e. the old America with Europe and the East. And we are certainly not inappropriate when we venture to say that she belonged to those few gifted scholars who would have mastered an analytical synthesis of these different cultures of mankind.

This was her point of departure when, for the first time, she came into direct contact with India. In 1970, after her Ph.D., she had become Member of the newly established Orissa Research Project at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg. This interdisciplinary research project aimed at a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of the cult of Jagannātha and the tradition of Orissa. Anncharlott Eschmann was among the first members who started work in Orissa in autumn 1970. It took her only few weeks to begin her actual field work on the Mahimā Dharma, a Hindu reform movement which was hitherto rather unknown outside Orissa. Thanks to her personal charm and her enthusiastic interest she soon won full support of Viśvanātha Bābā, the Head of the Mahimā Dharmins, for her research. It were the Mahimā Dharmins who accepted her as their sister and through whom she received her "initiation" into her most intensive yet so short a period of research in India.

In course of her study of Alekhism which has its roots both in Orissa's great medieval philosophical tradition as well as in Orissa's villages of the Hindu-tribal frontier, Anncharlott Eschmann widened her research to the more general question of mutual relationship between tribal and folk culture and the Brahmanic traditions, problems of Hinduisation and the influence of folk religion upon Brahmanic Hinduism. It was in this connection that she took up her intensive studies on Narasiṃha's relation to tribal deities and the Jagannātha cult of Puri during her second stay in Puri in 1974. Another outstanding contribution in this respect are her findings about certain tribal prototypes of the famous yet most secret rituals of Navakalevara of Lord Jagannātha.

During her research on Mahimā Dharma as well as on the origin of the cult of Jagannātha she developed her own interdisciplinary method. During her countless tours even to most remote places in Orissa and the boardering areas she very successfully combined socio-ethnological methods of interviewing priests and ritual functionaries with an intensive study of their oral and literary traditions.

In autumn 1975 Anncharlott Eschmann was appointed Director of the Branch Office of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg at New Delhi. Till 1977 she intensified her studies by frequent visits to Orissa and several lecture tours throughout India which gave her the opportunity to discuss thoroughly the results of her research with Indian scholars.

In Delhi, like previously in Orissa, she quickly won a number of friends whom she used to entertain with her generous hospitality in her tastefully furnished and decorated flat, as she had done before in Heidelberg.

At several international conferences in England, Sweden and Mexico she lectured on her studies on Orissa. Her friends in Heidelberg met her for the last time in September 1976 when she was on her way back from the International Orientalists' Congress in Mexico where she had presented a paper on the tribal affiliations of the Liṅgarāj Cult at Bhubaneswar.

She died in Delhi on 6-4-1977 of a serious illness which had befallen her during a study tour through Andhra Pradesh and Orissa which she had undertaken with a view to collect further material on the Narasiṃha Cult and the origin of the Cult of Jagannātha.

India, and Orissa in particular, had become much more than her second home. It was like an inner call or a higher summon which brought her to and kept her in India. India had become her love and, as we all know, her fate. True to her deep attachment to Hinduism but at the same time remaining rooted in Christianity, her funeral in Delhi was both Hindu and Christian. Pandits and a protestant priest spoke at her cremation at the Nigambodh Ghat and half of the ashes were sunk into the Yamuna and the other half was buried in her childhood paradise Ticino.

It remains with her friends, colleagues and scholars to continue her work on India's great cultural heritage. We, her friends and colleagues in Germany, are therefore, very grateful to her friends in Orissa and the Council of Cultural Relations, to its President Dr. Radhanath Rath and its Secretary General Girija Patnaik, and to the Utkal University, its Vice-Chancellor and Prof. Dr. M. N. Das for establishing the Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Lectures which will help to keep her memory alive and will also give new impetus to the promotion of a new type of Indology to which she had devoted her life.

DR. ESCHMANN'S CONTRIBUTION TO ORISSAN STUDIES*

G. C. TRIPATHI

I feel it a proud privilege of mine to be asked to speak a few words on the contribution of Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann within the framework of the Orissa Research Project to the advancement of our knowledge as regards the religious tradition of Orissa. She was that type of a research scholar who bubbles with new ideas and ever fresh approaches towards the age-old problems and who not only makes astonishing discoveries himself but also considerably enriches and influences the research work of others who work with him. It is not possible to imagine what shape the researches of the ORP would have taken, had not Dr. Eschmann been associated with it from the very beginning; but it is absolutely clear that in such a case, it would have been much poorer in its contents and findings.

As she was a student of the History of Religion, one of the major questions that interested her in the context of Indian religions was to find out how forceful and vital is the tradition of Hinduism in the present times. This question was linked up with the question of the rôle of Hinduistic tradition for the formation of modern India. She wanted to find out whether the Hinduistic tradition is capable of re-generating itself and could accommodate itself to the changed circumstances of the present day society. Though of course the Hinduistic tradition has constantly modified and developed itself according to the needs of the time and the society, as any student of Hindu religion who has made a survey of it from the Vedas to the Bhakti literature of medieval times, knows, yet the challenges thrown to the Hinduistic tradition in the modern times can well be said not to have been existent at any time in the past. In order to find out an answer to this question she selected a religious sect which has come up in Orissa only in the last century, i. e. the *Mahimā Dharma*. She made a thorough study of the scriptures of the sect, talked with its followers and met its religious preceptors. This study led her to the conclusion that the Mahimā Dharma originated without any outside influence, i. e. it has come up from within the Hinduistic-cum-Buddhistic religious tradition of Orissa itself. There is no trace of its propagator Mahimā Svāmī having come into contact with the religion of Islam or with Christian Missionaries. Here was an example, according to her, to show that the Indian religious tradition is still strong and dynamic enough to effect reforms in its structure with its own internal force. The tradition can change and regenerate itself without any foreign catalytic agent.

---

*First Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Meeting, Bhubaneswar, Sept. 24, 1978.

The investigations that she carried out on the Mahimā Dharmins led her to the heart of the tribal Orissa, the religious believes of which soon attracted her attention. She was fascinated with their religious symbols in the form of unhewn stones or wooden posts on the one hand and on the other, their strong religiosity which showed to her that there need not be a beautifully carved stone statute for religious practices. Since such uniconical symbols are presently found to be enshrined even in the most important temples like that of, for example, Lingarāj in Bhuvaneshwar, it was natural that an inter-action between tribal religion and the high Hinduistic religion as well as the process of a tribal religious cult becoming a high Hinduistic cult, soon inspired her to take up a closer study.

Her main contention was that the tribals do not need any temple nor even an icon for their religious practices. The deity with the tribals does not manifest herself through an image or *mūrti* but through a person, the priest, who gets possessed by her. It is through him that a communication is established between the worshipper and the deity who speaks to them while the possessed person is in trance. There might be a few stone pebbles or wooden posts at the spot where the priest gets possessed but these religious symbols are not a constant object of worship. Sacrifice is an important, though occasional, part of this religious practice of the tribals and is offered to the deity on the occasion when she is present in her medium.

When the process of Hinduisation starts, the connection of the deity with the medium weakens and the religious symbol gains in importance. Some sort of regular Pūjā is performed to the religious symbols and they come to be accepted by a wider strata of the society, often going beyond the tribe living in that locality. A regular Pūjā, association of priests and more than local importance are thus a major step towards the upgradation of a tribal cult. Depending upon its importance in the region around, a temple is gradually constructed by individual or collective efforts enshrining those religious symbols. However, with the tribal cult attaining a regional importance through the construction of a temple, the original priests of the temple are almost invariably retained, though a few Brahmin priests might also be associated with them. This is the reason why in many of the Orissan temples, even in the most important ones, all or at least an important group of the temple priests are of tribal origin. Since the cult is of tribal origin, it is not possible to practise the cult without the association of its original priests.

Amongst the tribal religious symbols which Dr. Eschmann investigated, the one which fascinated her most was the goddess *Stambheśvarī*. She developed a special foundness for this goddess, "the lady of the post", about whom she seemed to know even the minutest detail. Already in 1971, seeing Subhadrā at the time of the car festival, she remarked that Subhadrā can be none else but the goddess Stambheśvarī incorporated into the Jagannātha cult because of her importance. This is the reason why she is still worshipped as Durgā. This idea which seemed convincing to all of us, she persued further and after a long field research combined with factual knowledge and considerable reflections on the subject, she developed a theory on the evolution of the triad of Jagannātha which is incorporated in the proceedings of the ORP. She was convinced that just as there is a "lady of the post", there must also have been a "lord of the post". There is no reason to believe that only a female goddess was worshipped in a post, there could as well have been a male god worshipped as a similar post. Of these two, the worship of the female goddess is still prevalent separately, whereas the male god can well be said to be a precursor of Jagannātha. They were associated with various gods in turn who happened to be pre-dominent in that locality and region. The male and the female of the gods of this trinity are original and the introduction of another male god i. e. Balabhadra is secondary.

Though it is not possible to peal out all the layers which surround the Jagannātha cult, yet the one point which she was absolutely sure of, is that Jagannātha has been a Narasiṃha at some stage or the other. The first time when she mentioned it to me and expressed the opinion that the physical features of Jagannātha are borrowed from those of Narasiṃha (for example : his round eyes show an expression of anger and fury and his skull shows the form of a lion head), I was rather amused with this theory. But not discouraged by this she investigated further and collected ample material and photographs to prove this theory. She showed that Narasiṃha has often been depicted on a pole, since he is believed to have came out of the pole for his devotee Prahlāda. Since Narasiṃha is strongly associated with a pole, he is worshipped in the form of a pole on which sometimes the head of a lion is carved. The worship of Narasiṃha has been very popular in Orissa in ancient times and there is every probability of such a Narasiṃha depicted on a wooden pole assuming later the form and shape of Jagannātha. She also showed that if a tribal symbol is taken over in Hinduism and the development process leads it to Vaiṣṇavism, it is most likely to become a Narasiṃha who combines in himself the furious as well as the erotic aspects. Both these aspects are pre-dominent not only in the tribal religious cults but also in the Vajrayāna school of Buddhism which was popular in Orissa between 8th to 12th century. The erotic aspect in Narasiṃha is provided by Lakṣmī who is depicted as sitting in his lap. In fact, the conclusion which she arrived at by her field work and observation is corroborated by the cult practices in the Jagannātha temple and certain descriptions in ancient texts. It is stated in the Puruṣottama Māhātmya that the original form of the three statues of the Jagannātha temple was that of Narasiṃha. It is the god Narasiṃha who has transformed himself into these three figures. I have given the details of the association of Narasiṃha with Jagannātha in my article on Navakalevara in the book. "The Cult of Jagannātha and the Regional Tradition of Orisa". At the time of Navakalevara, Jagannātha is treated solely and exclusively as Narasiṃha and the consecration of the Nyāsadāru is effected as if it were Narasiṃha. The rite of the Navakalevara, which is very secret, thus seems to have preserved a very old trait, which Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann was able to discover from a completely different source, only on the basis of her field studies.

Further, it was she who discovered for the first time that the tribals also perform a sort of Navakalevara, or renewal of their wooden posts much on the lines as it is done in the Jagannātha temple. She has thus been able to establish a direct link between the Navakalevara of Jagannātha and the similar practices followed by the Khonds and Dumals. Similar to the practice of placing Brahmapadārtha in the belly of the Jagannātha statues, the Khonds strike golden nails into their poles at the time of Prāṇapratiṣṭhā which infuses these poles with life. I was very thankful to her for this information because later in course of my studies on Navakalekara, I discovered that the pole of Sudarśana in the Jagannātha temple also contains a piece of gold. Her field studies thus astonishingly corroborated the facts which we gathered from older literary sources.

I think that the trait which distinguished Dr. Eschmann from all other scholars of the same discipline was her inborn capacity to feel and understand the religions believes of an alien culture as the people of that culture do. Most of the studies on comparative religion are marred by the fact that the investigating scholar fails to bring up sufficient objectivity and open-mindedness. Their observations thus remain biased. She, however, never suffered from such shortcomings. She had such a fine sense, such a fine feeling for the sentiments of alien religious phenomena that she could experience them almost personally and subjectively as a part of her own internal personality. This was the reason which led Hindus and Mahimā Dharmins to feel that she is expressing their own religious sentiments.

It was the desire of Dr. Eschmann to investigate further the rôle of Narasiṃha in the religious tradition of Orissa and to collect all possible data on shrines of Narasiṃha in this region. This was also to form the basis of her work for the D. Litt. degree. But unfortunately God did not favour her with the completion of her research project and with her sad and untimely demise, the burden has now fallen on us to proceed further following her foot-steps and adopting the methodology of the research which she evolved for herself and which is a happy combination of the features of sociological as well as historical disciplines, so that we may be able to understand the numerous currents of the religious development of this mysterious land which is known as Orissa.

I

ŚĀSTRA AND PRAYOGA : MĀRGA AND DEŚĪ

ON CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF INDIAN CULTURE

Kapila Vatsyayan
New Delhi

As I stand before you today, I have both a sense of great pain as also a sense of gratification. Pain, because so young a life and so talented a scholar left us in the prime of her life. Gratification, because her work will speak for her, and for all those who have been associated with this very important project, called the Orissa Research Project, far beyond her own life span and ours present here. I had known Anncharlott both personally and intellectually. As a scholar, she has always impressed me with her erudition and her incisive insight. As a human being, she was lively, vivacious and a person of great human warmth. Her attitude to life was reflected not only in her academic pursuits but also in her conduct and style of living. All this brought us close to each other on many dimensions.

Besides, there was a very special intellectual companionship where each of us was trying to examine and re-examine the Indian traditions with criteria and conceptual models hitherto not accepted either by the historian or the sociologist. She had stimulated 'thinking' for me through her article and research paper "Religion, Reaction and Change

—The Role of Sects in Hinduism". In this paper, she had raised the very important issue of the use of the word 'sect' in the Indian context. With penetrating insight, she concluded that the term 'sect' was introduced for understanding the Indian pattern through pure analogy. She had drawn attention to the fact that there was a vast difference between the word *saṃpradāya* and the word 'sect' as transferred from the Christian context to the Hindu context.

While it may seem a very far cry from her concern with the sociology of religion and my concern with the arts of India as also the sociology of the arts of India, both of us realised very soon that in fact this was an identical concern for finding valid and appropriate conceptual models for understanding the Indian tradition through its 'own yardsticks' both on the conceptual and the empirical level, rather than through adapting criteria deduced from other civilizations and cultures, or through terms which were transferred terms through vague analogios.

More particularly we discussed at some length the conceptual models which are today available for understanding the Indian situation. Naturally, the foremost amongst these are the two which have been mentioned in your own introduction on the Orissa Research Project, namely the Redfield concept of the "great" and "little" traditions and Srinivasan's concept of Sanskritisation. These concepts have been almost universally accepted by the sociologists and have also been applied by the historians. Added to this is the recent critical writing, both in history and sociology, which applies Levi-Strauss and other structuralists models for the Indian traditions *in toto* without modifications. The Orissa Research Project will no doubt bring to light the fact that there is no insulation between the all India "great" traditions from the "little" traditions of Indian villages and that it is no longer possible to speak of a Hindu Brahmin-tribal dichotomy in India. We discussed this particular deduction of this Project in many sessions from various points of view including the supportive evidence which I had at my command from other regions of India, particularly Kerala and Manipur. In this context, there were many moments of great joy and reconfirmation, because her findings in relation to religion I could support with my findings in the fields of the arts. Indeed, if I may be permitted to state, she was fascinated with a conceptual model which I have tried to enunciate in a work entitled "Folk Traditions of Indian Dance". Two main conclusions were drawn from a study of the artistic traditions and specially the dance traditions of India in that work. First, that there was a continuous dialogue and inter-penetration between different levels of artistic manifestation within a region, and that there was also a schematic communication amongst different regions at particular levels. She was also fascinated with my idea of dividing the Indian cultural traditions not only as micro units and macro movements, but macro sub-groups comprising contiguous areas. I shall have occasion in this lecture to dwell upon the conceptual model briefly because it may have some relevance for those who have been working in the Orissa Research Project.

I have prefaced my concern with some concepts today with these remarks merely to submit to this audience that the reasons for my own having accepted this rare honour of delivering the Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Lecture is thus both personal and intellectual. I could not have said 'No' to an occasion which allowed to me to pay personal tribute to her but more, my belief that the future of Indian studies either at the theoretical or at the empirical levels lies in an intensive study of the regional traditions of India both diachronically and synchronistically by both a study of texts as also the living continuities. It is also my belief that instead of adapting conceptual models, or for that matter even structural systems which have been deduced by an examination of other cultures, it would be appropriate to deduce these models from an understanding of both the textual tradition of India as also the living continuities in India, sometimes related and sometimes seemingly unrelated. Also, I believe that in India, there were conceptual models which the tradition itself provides and therefore, it may be useful to examine the models themselves, rather than to attempt to fit in data within an alien or so-called universal model. In short, methodologically it should be possible to first examine whether in a given culture, there has been any debate or consideration of 'conceptual models' and empirical data, and if so, whether these are valid in an examination of the living continuities. This is an approach somewhat different from either the inductive or deductive.

For purposes of this lecture, I have thus chosen to place before you a consideration of some terms which are relevant for a study of the Indian arts, but which are probably also relevant for a study of social systems and perhaps, therefore, even the sociology of religion. These terms, I have tried to analyse as a conceptual model rather than merely technical terms which have been used in particular contexts. The two pairs of seeming binary opposites, which I should like to consider here, are *śāstra* and *prayoga* and an other pair, namely *mārga* and *deśī*. Each one of these pairs would probably throw problems which would be of relevance to a larger understanding of Indian tradition. First then, let us begin with the term of the pair *śāstra* and *prayoga*.

Controversies on the relative importance of theory and practice have been heated and intense in the 20th century in many disciplines, the science, fundamental and applied, social sciences and the humanities. Scholars have argued vehemently from either side on the primacy of the theoretical or conceptual or the empirical or pragmatic. Others have chosen to place the two in an hierarchical order through an inductive or deductive approach. Yet a third school has advocated a judicious balance between the two and have spoken of the organic and intrinsic inter-dependence of the two. Any student of the contemporary social sciences or the humanities has thus been obliged to state his terms of reference by stressing the theoretical or the field work. or has proceeded from a set of empirical data to deduce or propose a theory, or has commenced from a theoretical base or what is today called 'conceptual model' or framework (or even an ideology) and has then fitted his date and facts into the conceptual framework. The discussion on the methodologies and their applicability has been near pervasive in almost all disciplines and has given rise to the several schools and sub-schools in critical writing on history, social sciences and literature and the various 'isms' that any student of art often encounters. It is not necessary to enumerate all of them here. A sizeable body of critical writing in these fields has been devoted to the problem of specific approaches and methodologies. Perhaps it is the result of these discussions that some disciplines like history, earlier considered as the humanity, are today seeking to be recognised as social sciences, and art-studies are taking a new analytical turn.

Alongside has been an overwhelming insistence on an inter-disciplinary approach to a problems, where all factors, *viz.* scientific, technological, political, social, linguistic and artistic should be taken into account. In some contexts, this has been termed as 'holistic' approach subscribed to by some and rejected by others.

My purpose in prefacing my specific query with these general remarks is precisely to draw attention to the fact that the contemporary controversies and discussions in 'modern disciplines', be it of the social sciences, humanities or the arts, have counter-parts in India at a self-conscious intellectual level, and conversely, that a fresh look at the twin concepts of *śāstra* and *prayoga* in the Indian context may well bring insights with contemporary validity for understanding the problem of methodologies of modern disciplines more generally and the very real problem of finding a suitable terminology for understanding the concepts underlying the Indian arts more specifically.

First and foremost thus would be the question of defining the word *śāstra* and to find a viable English equivalent which can be used in all the varied contexts in which the Sanskrit term is used. Despite the Sanskrit lexicographers, explaining the term in the generic sense for a body of knowledge pertaining to any single discipline, the term has been largely used during the last hundred years or more for the English term 'theory' or 'theoretical'. This is almost universally accepted in many contexts and disciplines. At the outset it needs to be clarified that the term 'theory' in its primary meaning excludes applicability or the practical and suggests an insistence on the speculative and contemplative. It implies knowledge or pure science as such, without reference to its practical application. Further it is agreed that a 'theory' is a tentative statement of a supposed principle or relationship as of cause and effect, in short a working hypothesis. Only in its derivative meanings does it suggest the abstract principles and universal truths of any body of related facts. Now if we return to the word *śāstra* and examine the varied contexts in which it is used as a suffix, it will be immediately clear that while the second derivative meanings of 'theory' can serve as a rough equivalent in some contexts, the primary meaning of the 'theoretical' as pertaining exclusively to the 'speculative' and the 'contemplative' (from its Greek roots and terminology) is almost ruled out. We find that the term appears to be used in the Indian context invariably to disciplines which have an 'applicability' aspect inbuilt into the theoretical system. Neither the *dharma-, artha-, kāma-, cikitsā-śāstras,* nor the *śilpa-śāstras* or the *nāṭya-śāstra,* appear to exclude the practical, the applied, and the empirical, if we may call it as such. If we extend this argument, even if somewhat facetiously, to ask the question why the Indians never thought of suffixing the last *puruṣārtha, mokṣa,* with the word *śāstra,* the answer will be self-evident. Also, while there is *anātma-vidyā,* there is no *ātma-śāstra* or *brahman-śāstra,* the two key words of Indian speculative thought. The absence of these, to my mind, is indicative of the fundamental approach of significance and cannot be lightly discussed, even if it has been facetiously stated. In short, the *śāstra* appears not to concern itself with only that which is purely 'speculative', 'contemplative', 'ideational', opposed to the empirical or practical. In short, all aspects of life which pertain to the physical, material, socio-economic, political, physiological, even psychical, can be abstracted to a set of principles or norms, a framework or a hypothesis, but the spirit, the intangible that transcends them all and runs through them all, cannot be bound within the walls of a formal theoretical framework. The methodologies of attaining a psychical state of 'beautitude', an experiential state of bliss, are set forth, but not the state or the nature of the last final experience. It was perhaps the recognition of this distinction between theoretical speculation and *śāstra,* that has led many others to use the words textual, 'manual', 'treatise', canon, as equivalent or cognates for the same word *śāstra.* Now it begins to shed all the nuances of speculative thought and certainly the ideational and acquires a technical meaning of a 'manual', a set of rules whose efficacy lies only in its utility and practicability. This would be particularly true of all that we today recognize as 'technical sciences' and the 'crafts'.

The term assumes yet another dimension when we begin to look at a sphere of life which is today called the 'behavioural sciences'. Here, we repeatedly come across the terms *śāstrācāra* and *lokācāra* or *kulācāra* as antonyms. A related pair *daivaka* and *laukika* has also been used by modern sociologists to analyse the behavioural pattern of Indian society, by often dissociating them from the original contexts in which they were used. We are aware that in the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina pantheons, the gods and goddesses were classified as *śāstrika* or *śāstrīya* (that which is sanctioned by codified sacerdotal texts) and *laukika,* or sanctioned by the practice and conventions of people. Today they are being equated largely to the behavioural (and not just ritual) patterns, to a socio-economic or cultural elite within a caste structure, and to a popular culture mostly identified as rural or tribal. This has led to a tacit acceptance of a seeming dichotomy between the two—a hostility rather than a 'continuum' or differentiation within a system. Little wonder thus that the 'tribal', 'rural', 'urban' classification of sociologists, placed in a unilinear progressive graph has not been able to contain the complexities of the

Indian social structure, where the so-called *śāstrika* is equated to theory or 'sacred textual', and the *maukhika* equated to the *laukika,* where the terms begin to denote the 'literate' and the 'non-literate' or 'oral' traditions of this society. By a perverse logic—the *śruti* would then become *maukhika* and consequently *laukika.* And can this be accepted? The discussion has acquired further complexity by the use of the terms 'sanskritisation' and 'vernacularization' in the purely sociological context where they denote the processes by which a less affluent or privileged class of people begin to acquire the behavioural patterns of an elitist-society.

Leaving sociology alone for the time being, although relevant to our discussion, when we turn to the arts, we find that the term 'classical' is being largely equated to the term *śāstrika* or *śāstrīya,* and it is in this sense that many are using the term *śāstrīya saṅgīta* or *śāstrīya nṛtya, śāstrīyā kalā,* etc., somewhat vaguely taking into account the sacerdotal and the elitist mentioned above, and again tacitly rejecting the speculative and the conceptual. Here also *deśī* or *loka* are used as antonyms and equated to 'tribal' or 'rural', or more imprecisely 'folk', in the sociological sense. Conversely, the word 'classical' is also used as a term for periodisation, to indicate sometimes pre-8th century, at other times pre-10th century and in some cases even pre-6th century developments in Indian art. Then 'classical' is opposed to 'medieval'.

This is obviously a transference of the Greek term 'classical' used in the Western context to denote both a period and a qualitative artistic genre. Examples from other spheres could be added to lay bare the complexities of the situation in which we appear to have accepted where the same terms are being used to denote vaguely, but not precisely, the Indian connotations.

It is also evident from the above, thus, that the term *śāstra* in contemporary terms can stand for a theory as an abstraction from a set of facts, a 'technical manual', or treatise, sociological term for the behaviour of certain groups, a term to distinguish the literature, textual from the oral, and a term for differentiating qualitative artistic excellence. The word 'theory' on the other hand does not quite often open out all those avenues of exploration. An examination of the manuals, treatises and formulae will make it clear that the *śāstra* indeed was a deduced conceptual model which provided for applicability and thus variation and modification. Each *śāstra* is only a framework or structure and thus rather more universal than local, but in no event is it a scripture as ordinarily understood. All it does is to break up the constituents into its smallest parts or units and then builds an edifice through a schematic design of inter-relationships. This is true of the *vāstu-*, *śilpa-*, *saṅgīta-* and *nṛtya-śāstras* and others.

Now for the term *prayoga* and all that it has been used to denote. Again, except for its primary meaning of joining together or of throwing a missle, it has been broadly used for 'applicability'. In its extended meaning as constant practice, with a stress on the empirical, it has connotated experimentation, innovation and variability. Indeed the nuance of experimentation has led to a literary school of the experimentalists in Hindī and other literatures called *prayogavāda*. We had observed that the antonym in the sociological sense to *śāstrācāra* was *lokācāra* or *deśācāra*. In the artistic sphere *prayoga* has not been equated to *deśī* or *loka* but has certainly conveyed the insistence on *vyavahāra, abhyāsa* ('practice') and all that we understand by the empirical, the practical, the experiential and related to a specificity of time and space. In this last sense it comes closest to *deśī* ; is almost a cognate, but not a synonym, clearly differentiated from the universal movement or constant flow of the *śāstra*. In the context of language alone, we can encounter the phrase *devabhāṣā* or Sanskrit (i. e., refined) and *deśī* equated to the regional or local. The perusal of the discussion on the term *prayoga* again clearly unfolds the complexities, and the varied contexts in which it has been and can be used.

This brief enumeration of the two terms and the possibilities of variety of approaches from the academic to the sociological to the purely artistic will perhaps make it clear that the terms denote concepts and processes which cannot be easily contained in their English equivalents so far precisely or imprecisely used. Each of these would need to be pursued first separately in the specific disciplines and contexts and then taken together in their underlying organic inter-relationships and inter-action of disciplines and areas.

I should like to raise one more question at this stage and this is the new insistence on an inter-disciplinary approach. If we look at the Indian system, we find that an inter-disciplinary approach was at the core of the vision and structural system and some of the complexities of terminology arise only because cognizance of this inter-disciplinary system is not taken into account. No one discipline could be understood in its totality without taking into account the findings in other disciplines or, to put it simply, that the *śāstra* was just that ability to cull out the 'universals' from a series of empirical facts drawn from a variety of related or cognate disciplines. The story of Viṣṇudharmottara of the conversation of Vajra and Mārkaṇḍeya crystallises pithly the vision and methodology in the arts. But it is so in other disciplines and spheres of life too. My other submission thus is to stress the need for identifying the contours of this inter-disciplinary approach where the interconnections and inter-dependence in all levels and spheres of life was being taken for granted or was fundamental to the study of any one discipline. So far scholars of Indian studies have identified and have dealt in great detail on the micro-classifactory system contained in each unit or discipline but have not placed these micro-classifactory details and distinctions in total perspective where each unit was serving as an indispensable role in a larger organic system full of concordances, synthesis, with a clearly identifiable pattern of distinctiveness, autonomy, multi-layering and inter-action. The system has a staggering complexity which almost belies identification, but closely observed, it has the rigorous organisational pattern and structure of, let us say, the London Tubes, the Paris Metro, or nearer home, the Body system. It is no accident that the image of man as *puruṣa* has been uniformly used as a term of reference in all disciplines and spheres of life, ranging from the cosmological to the purely physical as one symbolishing co-ordinated activity where each part is interconnected with the other.

These remarks may appear far-fetched but perhaps the pertenance of these general considerations will become clear as soon as we turn our attention to the one *ṣāstra* with which I am concerned. My purpose is to examine the role of the *śāstra* and *prayoga* in all the sense enumerated above in one single context, i. e., the context of the Indian arts and to illustrate how the two are both conceptually and structurally inter-related and inter-dependent—considered as two essential aspects of the same artistic concern and also to identify the exact methodologies of the inter-disciplinary approach as evident in this one single sphere.

One could adopt the historical, chronological approach and trace the history of the Indian arts over a period of two thousand years, i. e. what is termed as a diachronic study of the two terms, or the synchronic approach and trace it through space, in a given period. I am, with purpose, departing from this standard method and am instead trying to understand the Indian arts from the point of view of (a) their conceptual speculative base (which can be called 'śāstric' with provisions) ; (b) the structural framework which provides the methodology the *vidhi* of creation ; (c) to see the relationship of what was laid down in the *śāstra* (canons, treatises, theory) and all that we understand by the terms creativity ; (d) and finally to point at the fact that in this sphere all that we often recognize as the 'śāstric' need not be operative or seen at the urban, elitist level of society but may be traced in forms or genres, which are normally called *deśī/laukika* folk or tribal in sociological terms.

All this will naturally necessitate taking mighty leaps in time and space within the physical time at our disposal today. Nor is this detailing entirely necessary for a wise, knowledgeable audience. All these concerns will naturally need to be narrowed down to any one art or any one aspect of an art because neither all the arts nor even all aspects of one art could be delineated upon in one single lecture. In order to illustrate my theme, I shall focus on a seemingly unimportant aspect of the nāṭya-śāstra (the theatre arts), namely *āṅgikābhinaya,* called simply dance or movement generally considered unworthy of any academic discussions. But this one concern with movement, or dance itself may take us ultimately to underline and identify how a simple, seemingly spontaneous rhythmic use of the body cannot really be understood in its entirety without taking into cosideration disciplines as far flung as *cikitsāśāstra* on the one hand and mathematics or early geometry or trignometry on the other.

So thus, to return to the *nāṭyaśāstra*. This is a *śāstra* both in the primary sense of presenting a theory or a conceptual framework of artistic creation, but it is also a *śāstra* in its extended meaning in so far as it is a compendium of technical details of applied methodologies and skills required for a successful presentation of drama. But what is of greatest significance is the fact that this *śāstra* takes cognisance of the empirical, the applied in its fundamental conceptual framework and in this sense it is unique on one level, but representative of the Indian system on another, because it may well be a *śāstra* of *prayoga* or a *prayoga-śāstra*. If this sounds a contradiction in terms, let us very briefly examine the text itself, the text in all its manifold complexities and the corrupted form in which it has come down to us not withstanding the heroic efforts put in by Rama Krishna Kavi, Ramaswami Sastri and others and without as far as possible the help of Abhinava Bhāratī. The latter not because it is not significant, but because we should try to understand the text as it stood at least eight hundred years before Abhinava interpreted it with the aid of the *śaivite darśana* or of others who examined it from the several yardsticks or positions of the specific system of *darśanas*. I am with purpose not using the term philosophy here.

The very first verse raises the problem of terminology, because Bharata begins by saying : 'I shall now explain the canons of Drama'—(*Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Nāṭya*). Fortunately, it is not necessary for us to point out that *nāṭya* does not denote a literary work alone but it deals with the creative effort of both the *kavi* and the theatric director, thus *śravya* and *dṛśya*. Indeed Abhinava Gupta may be brought to aid for he, too, insists on pointing at both the literary and the non-literary here.

This object of diversion or play (NS, I—V, 7-12) was created for all the *varṇas* including the *śūdras*. In making what appears to be a simple statement to be welcomed in a society wedded to the goals of egalitarianism, Bharata in one stroke through two phrases has opened up a whole Pandora box which would demand reconsideration of all sociological deductions of equating the 'śāstric' or *śāstrācāra* to the behavioural patterns of the upper classes in term of status and position and the preserve of literate society and also if 'śāstric' is equated again to the 'literate' or the written word. If we transport ourselves in time to the 4th or 2nd century A.D., whichever lower dating for the Nāṭyaśāstra, and re-read this within the framework of the normally accepted notion of an isolated hierarchical society, we may as well come to the conclusion that this was a most extraordinary radical, almost revolutionary statement. For us, it holds a crucial key to an understanding of what follows. Bharata does not stop at throwing the doors open by an insistence on the equalising role of theatre but proceeds further by basing his base text on all that which is considered 'sacred', pure, and beyond the pale of secularity and profanity. After all, why this insistance on drawing upon the four *vedas* and why the term *śāstra* and why open it to all and sundry, not just make it another exclusive category for the lowly in status and socio-economic conditions. This statement, as we know, is made in answer to a question which asks "How did the *nāṭyaveda* similar to the *vedas* originate and for whom is it meant, how many parts does it possess, how far does it extend and how is it to be applied?" The answer goes further by stating that it will incorporate all the *śāstras* (M. M. Ghosh translates this as 'scriptures' here I.15) and all the arts and crafts (*śilpa*). Thus the *śāstra* of *nāṭya* in itself is not an exclusive *śilpa* or a theory, it is a combination or amalgam of the theoretical, the conceptual, i. e. the 'śāstric' universals of all disciplines and the practice of all the arts (*śilpa*). Does it not already point at the organic relationship of the conceptual and the empirical and does it not open the door to what follows in thirtysix long chapters? Those pithy statements themselves will make it clear that the *śāstra* and the *prayoga* were not to be considered as exclusive categories and that also a clear distinction was made between *śāstra* and *śilpa*.

Somewhat later the word *prayoga* is used in the more specific sense of a performance, when the *devas* are considered unfit (*ayogya*) to do anything with drama (*nāṭya,* i. e. actual dramatic performance). This is followed by the positive answer that the sages (*ṛṣis*) who have kept their vows alone have the capacity to put this into practice (*vrata,* I.23) finally the statement that the art was learnt from Brahman from whom Bharata and his sons studied both it and its application or usage (*prayoga,* I.25).

The use of the term *prayoga* recurs in this chapter, in many contexts including the adaption of different styles (*vṛttis*), the special place of the *prayoga*.

A reading of the first ninety odd verses of the NS makes it clear that the *śāstra* was not dissociated from the *prayoga* at any stage and in fact the latter was almost primary (See I.46-47, 53, 54, 58) (in the context of the dismemberment of the *daityas* I-64 or when the *daityas* object—76-78 or for dramatic performance 76, 96, 97, 99, 100, etc.).

Now then it is clear that in conceiving a major artistic theory of creation (aesthetics), Bharata was at no time even aware that there existed or could exist an irreconcilable dichotomy between theory and practice in the modern sense. In short, the abstract and the concrete, the conceptual and speculative and empirical were inbuilt into one single system.

We could minutely analyse the *Nāṭya Śāstra* or any *śāstra* in terms of structured systems where each single component is considered individually and then in its relationship to the other parts and the whole. This could be shown through a diagram to lay bare the rigorous structured system which is followed by this first theoretician of the Indian tradition. namely Bharata.

However, we must pass only to one crucial pair which I spoke of initially, namely *mārga* and *deśī* and a subsidiary pair related to those, *nāṭyadharmī* and *Lokadharmī*.

In a brilliant essay on 'The Nature of Folk-lore and Popular Art', Coomaraswamy discusses the twin concepts of *mārgī* and *deśī* and sacred and profane. Mircea Eliado also in a different context examines the sacred and profane not only in the Indian context, but also in other world cultures. Sociologists and anthropologists, like Milton Singer and Baidyanath Saraswati, have examined these concepts on the operative level through field studies. Milton Singer examines the role of the 'cultural performance' in Madras City and Saraswati investigates the social organisation of Kashi.

We may begin with an examination of these concepts first on the theoretical level in Sanskrit literature and as interpreted by creative writers and critics, and then examine their validity in the contemporary artistic manifestation both in sociological and artistic terms.

Coomaraswamy equates the word *mārga* to a highway and traces its derivation from *mṛg-*, 'to chase or hunt, especially by tracking'. "In the Ṛg-veda, p. 133-143, we are told it is familiar that what one hunts and tracks by its spoor is always the deity, the hidden light the 'Aditi', Sun or Agni, who must be found and is sometimes referred to as lurking in his lair." Coomaraswamy cites the verses in the Ṛg-veda where the word is repeatedly used in this sense. "In Ṛg-veda VIII. 2.6, men are said to pursue (*mṛgayante*) Indra, as one pursues a wild beast (*mṛgaṃ na*) with offerings of milk and kine : Varuṇa is compared to a "fierce-beast" (*mṛgas tuviṣmān*). In RV X.46:2, the Bhṛgus eager seekers after Agni, track him by his spoor (*padaiḥ*) like some lost beast (*paśuṃna naṣṭaṃ*)". Coomaraswamy concludes "that *Mārga* is then the creatures runaway, the tract to be followed (*padavīya*). One sees clearly what values are implied in the expression *mārga* (way) and how inevitably that which is *mārga* is likewise *Vimukti-dā,* since it is precisely by the finding of the hidden light that liberation is ejected.

While we shall return to an examination of this valuable view-point, let us see the contexts in which the words are used in other works.

The Sāma-veda on the other hand is the first to distinguish two levels of musical expression. The *mārga* here can be equated to a definite combination of notes in a given order, and belonging to the sphere of celestial music of the *gandharvas*: this is distinct from the music of 'man'. which can be regional and local. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa makes a similar distinction (III.2.4) in connection with the seduction of *vāc,* who is won over by the *devas* from the *gandharvas.* The word *mārga* is discussed again in the Puṣpasūtra (I.1.8.1&2; II.11.1.4&8 and II. 24.2). The Maśakakalpasūtra mentions it in the same way. The real discussion on the subject however continues in the technical context of music in the Nāṭyaśāstra (28.31), the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa (III.18.4-12), the Devībhāgavata Purāṇa (8.15.8), and of course practically all the musical texts ranging from Saṅgīta-ratnākara (1.4.11), to Saṅgītamakaranda (I.1.60), the Nṛtyaratnakośa (I.1.185), the Saṅgītadarpaṇa (I.4-6) and many others. The texts on drama and aesthetics also discuss the subject and Dhanañjaya in the Daśarūpaka (I.15) applies the terms to the relative use of gestures and instrumental music. Here the term is used in its generic sense and as part of discussion on the *Madhyamagrāma.*

An equally significant, almost more pervasive, discussion takes place on the term *deśī* both in the context of music as also dance and drama. It is extended to the field of languages in most part of India and this we shall refer to in due course.

Coomaraswamy's interpretation is again significant and valuable. He derives *deśī* from *'diś'* to indicate and hence *diś,* "region" or "quarter" or "local". He draws attention to the phrase *deśaṃ niviś-* to settle in a given locality, *deśa-*

vyavahāra or *deśācāra* "local custom", "way of world" and *deśya* "native". He goes on to explain that these are not mere terms that could be derogatively employed by city people or courtiers to countrymen in general, but that could be employed by dwellers in the city of God or in any Holy Land with reference to those beyond the pale. Heaven lies "behind the falcon", the worlds are 'under the sun' and in the 'power of death' ; "world" is *logus,* logically from Latin *locus,* a place defined by given conditions ; and *laukika,* 'mundane', is literally "local" ; it is precisely here (*iha*) in the worlds that the kindreds are "settled", "localised" and "native". He concludes "From the celestial or solar point of view *deśī* is thus mundane, human and devious and distinct from super-mundane, divine and direct : and this distinction of *mārga* (=*svarga*) from *deśī* as sacred from profane is in full agreement with the sense of expressions *rañjaka,* 'pleasing impassioning, affecting, etc.', and *vṛthā* wanton, random, as you like, in the manner it has been used in the context of the Śatapatha." These conclusions of Coomaraswamy we shall examine shortly but it may be added that several texts of music and dance which follow the Nāṭyaśāstra continue to use the term in the primary sense. Later a whole class of compositions is termed as *deśī* both in music and dance. *Deśī* is both a category of *rāgas* as also a particular *rāga.* In dance also, it is both a particular dance as also a category of dance specially of the *nṛtta* (abstract) type. The Saṅgītaratnākara clearly distinguishes the *deśī-rāgas* from the *mārgī* or *gandharva* music (5.4 and 6.358) and also defines the *deśī-rāga* as belonging to a particular region (6.713). The particular modal scale of the *deśī-rāga* is defined as one in which *re* is used as *graha, aṃśa* and *nyāsa,* excludes the *pañcama,* has a *mandra gāndhāra,* and a frequent use of *ma, ni* and *sa* (II.2.102). In several other places he refers to the term specially in the context of the discussion on the *jātis* and *tālas*.

Writers of the Saṅgītamakaranda, Rāgavibodha (1.6, 4.2), Saṅgītapārijāta (21), Bhāvaprakāśa (10.296.12) more or less follow the Saṅgītaratnākara. The Bhāvaprakāśa (10.299.17 & 10.296.10), the Daśarūpaka (11.9), along with the Saṅgītaratnākara (Chapter VII), also discuss *deśī-nṛtya* or *nṛtta* in several contexts. The text on *śilpa,* the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra (31.58), also includes a discussion on the subject. We could enlarge this list of references, but the few cited above make it clear that in the arts, there appears a recognition of two categories distinct, but related, like many other pairs of opposites in Indian thought and religion. A little later, we shall examine whether or not the categories pertained to celestial and terresterial or as Coomaraswamy suggests sacred and profane, or to a few purely formal elements of technique. However, at this stage it is necessary to point out that in all these texts ranging from the Sāmaveda to the Bṛhaddeśī there is no suggestion of hierarchial stratification in terms of *gandharva* or *mārgī* implying a category of music and dance which belongs to the elite *brāhmaṇas* and the upper privileged classes and *deśī* to the lower group of the *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*. Also there is little to support the view that one form was tribal, rural and village-based and the other town or urban-based. Celestial and terrestial are qualitative artistic terms, not sociological categories. It would have been perfectly understandable for the theorists to relate the *mārgī* or *gandharva-gāṇą* to the *nagara* and the *deśī* to the *grāma* in sociological terms, and the terms placed in a hierarchy of status. The system of establishing correlatives and correspondences was so pervasive and so well established that the addition of one more set of correspondences in sociological terms in a total framework would be logical. Its absence is a significant pointer at the fundamental approach to the concepts. From this primary source material there is no basis to establish a correlation of the *mārgī* with the urban and the *deśī* with the village or tribal. Alas, in much contemporary popular and even scholarly writing this simple correspondence has been tacitly accepted as a working hypothesis. *Mārgī* is considered 'classical', temple or court based, and *deśī* rural or tribal based, almost implying socio-economic levels, rather than qualitative differences in artistic terms.

The classification of *mārgī* and the *deśī* in music and dance texts does not assume the proportions of a debate or a controversy: it is only a statement of differentiated categories. In the field of literature (it must be remembered, that the terms were originally used in the sphere of music and dance), the terms are ransferred and extended to connote two parallel and related traditions often in tension. In contrast to the fields of music and dance there is a clear evidence of an awareness of polarity, a consciousness of both hierarchy and opposition. From the East to the West, and North to South, but particularly in the East and South India, the differentiation between *saṃskṛta* (refined sophisticated) and *prākṛta,* between Sanskrit and *deśī-bhāṣās* was known and much discussed. It ran parrallel to the discussion on the concepts of *śāstrācāra* and *deśācāra* or *lokācāra* in the field of social conduct. The 'śāstric' began to denote categories also of all that was sanctioned by texts, and *laukika* all that was sanctioned by practice and conventions of the particular group of people. Indeed this pattern in literature and social conduct or what one would term as religious practices was a uniform pattern in all parts of India. While in literature there was controversy and debate of the relevant merits of each, in the field of social conduct and life-cycle ritual, these were clearly complimentary categories. A history of Telugu and Kannada literature brings out the contours of the controversy particularly in the period ranging between the 12th to the 18th centuries. A similar although not as marked a debate can be traced in Bengalī, Oriya and possibly other languages.

It will be recalled that in the case of music and dance (and for that matter sculpture and painting) the codifiers take into account the local or regional styles and give 'śāstric' sanction to the regional developments, without establishing hierarchics or evaluation. This is largely a post-10th century phenomenon. In literature, there is an undertone of tension and some resistence from either side. Much effort and energy was spent both by creative and critical writers on the use of the *deva-bhāṣā or deśībhāṣā*. The parallel development of Sanskrit and regional languages continued well into the 18th century, but the emergence of full fledged languages was a new factor.

It is not necessary for us to go into the details of these literary developments particularly of the medieval period, but it is necessary to bear in mind that the spatial situation of different strata of society does not necessarily coordinate with the categories of *mārgī* and *deśī* as discussed in the theoretical texts, in the context of literature. In texts of music, dance and sculpture they refer to regional distinctiveness and variation as distinct from a formal language, and grammar of Art. Modern sociologists and cultural anthropologists have tried to understand these terms from their particular point of view. Milton Singer in the penetrating study on Madras, now incorporated in his study "When a great Tradition Modernises", and Richard Lenoy in the 'Speaking

Tree' have both gone into the question. Mr. Singer pertinently takes into account the views of Dr. V. Raghavan on the subject based on the latter's paper "Popular Music and Classical Music", besides his own field study and comes to the conclusion that there are two rhythms in cultural change :—

"The differentiation of folk popular devotional classical and modern urban cultural performances in relation to urbanisation suggests that the more general processes of change are operating in different spheres of culture. Each sphere of culture seems to be subject to opposing directions of change. One type of change tending to push a given cultural sphere in the direction of greater refinement and strict codification, the other in the direction of maximum popularity and practicality. At any given time, the content of a given cultural sphere is something of a compromise between two extremes, a range of inter-grading cultural forms. The prevelance of the refining tendencies sustained in several departments of culture over a long period will result in a level of aesthetic and intellectual achievement deservedly called a great tradition."

Answering the question whether the great tradition is undergoing a transformation in a metropolitan environment and whether it is a process of secularization, he says :—

"It would be inaccurate to apply the wastern concepts of secular urban mass culture and art for art's sake in interpreting these changes. There are indeed secularising tendencies, but they have not yet cut off urban culture from the traditional matrix of sacred culture. There is no sharp dividing line between religion and culture, and the traditional cultural media not only continue to survive in the city but have also been incorporated in novel ways into an emerging popular and classical culture." And finally after an examination of the phenomenon in Madras he concludes, "Many of the media or elements of them enter into the performances of more popular culture—purāṇic recitations, devotional plays, *bhajans,* since the difference between popular and classical culture rests not on a sharp difference in kind of media or theme but depends rather on the degree of sophistication and technical refinement and the balance among aesthetic, devotional and entertainment values that characterise the performance".

The views of an anthropologist who with great sensitivity takes into account aesthetic qualities have to be supplemented with the view of Dr. Niharranjan Ray from an art-historian's point of view. He cites many examples of the gradual chiselling and sophistication of many tribal and village forms in the field of sculpture, music and dance and arrives at the conclusion that "no objective historian of Indian art should necessarily follow the logical construct of social anthropologists and sociologists of Indian situation in regard to their classification and categorisation of 'tribal' fold and 'civilized' or 'high' as mutually exclusive and distinctively separate categories. The differences, and differences are many and various, one must admit, but they are not so much of kind as of degree of chasteness and elegance, of subtlety and sophistication, of complexity and comprehension of a higher level of technical knowledge and experience of vision and imagination. One may argue that these are all qualitative and hence operate towards making of art objects which are formally different, which indeed they are aesthetically speaking. But the so called 'tribal' or 'folk' have also their own forms and aesthetic standards. They are not merely of magical or ritualistic significance".

It will be obvious from these quotations that the matter of the levels of artistic expression viewed from completely divergent positions does fall into some sort of a pattern, where although categories can be clearly discerned, there is a continuum. Indeed it would appear that what Milton Singer identified as the matrix of traditional sacred culture is a large module comprising both *mārgī* and *deśī* elements. The village based traditional culture enters the city and metropolitan centres like Madras, and becomes either more sophisticated and refined in aesthetic terms or takes on another garb of popular city culture but it still community-based as in the case of *harikathā, bhajans,* etc. which he cites as examples. In short, the *mārgī* of village culture could become the *deśī* of popular city culture in artistic terms. Also one could analyse Milton Singer's statement about the 'secularisation' of the 'sacred culture' in other contexts, and may perhaps come to the conclusion that the 'traditional pattern' itself was an amalgam of the sacred and the secular. Sanskrit drama began with a ritual for propiating the gods and deities, but even in the prologue transformed itself into a secular drama in the portions called *nāndī* and *prarocanā.* In the context of the temple, while the *devadāsī* or the *maharī* dance inside the temple, there was always the 'man' dancer in women's garb in the temple court-yard, village square, who presented identical themes but with a slightly different purpose. Indeed a continuum between the two is evident, in most spheres of Indian art (not withstanding Coomaraswamy and Singer's valuable point) the *mārgī* and the *deśī* cannot be equated simply to 'sacred' and 'mundane', because in a single 'performance' or a single piece of work both may be contained.

Dr. Ray's statement is an evaluative statement of aesthetical achievements and points at the pitfalls of easy equations in anthropological social terms. The anthropologist however sees little or no continuum between what he calls the tribal society and peasant society. Indeed in a closely argued paper, Surjit Sinha comes to the conclusion that there is a very real distinction between the cultures of the tribals and those of Hindu peasantry, taken as a whole. He, however, concedes that the 'lowest castes', although primarily illiterate, are not completely free from the ethically loaded, purely moral theology and the world view of literate upper caste Hindus, whose messages they receive through verbal communication of wandering *sādhus* and through cultural performances such as dance and drama". He finally is prepared to examine whether the lower Hindu Castes are a special dimension of Hindu peasantry with a view to investigate whether the latter come nearer to the tribals or to the upper caste Hindus.

This last statement would perhaps come somewhat of a jolt for all those who have been investigating the artistic forms whether at the tribal or rural or urban level. While Coomaraswamy, Raghavan, Niharranjan Ray and Milton Singer come close to each other in discussing a continuum and an inter-penetration of the tribal elements into high arts, Prof. Sinha's findings seem to imply that the 'ethically loaded' messages and thus perhaps the artistic manifestations *in toto* travel only from the high to the low in sociological terms.

All these view points, along with the theoretical discussion on *mārgī* and *deśī* in the context of music, dance, literature, and to an extent sculpture and painting, will perhaps bear out the fact that although difficult and somewhat inexcliplicable through the yardsticks of material culture and

294·5
T737Y

G. NO
1441

technology, the Indian artistic situation at different levels of society can be understood as exclusive categories, but as the degree of chiselled sophistication and refinement and rigorous structuring which can be achieved at any given 'social-level' situation.

The analysis of both Dr. Raghavan and Dr. Niharranjan Ray bears out that they believe that the *deśī* or popular allows for greater freedom and a comparative absence of rules and codifications. Implied in their analysis is an assumption that the chiselled sophistication was also not rigorously but rigidly codified and that although it assimilated tribal and folk elements, it evolved an almost static position. Coomaraswamy. alone amongst these scholars, clearly sees the logic of the *mārga* in its initial meaning of a dug path, a high-way which is constantly on the move but in a particular direction with a specific purpose. It may perhaps be more appropriate to see what Coomaraswamy calls *deśī* or 'a by-way' (inspite of the insight into the etymological roots Latin *locus* and *loka* which imply a specificity of a spatial situation) as the circumscribing or limiting of eternal universal paths into the mannerism and styles of a region or a 'given' time situation. Indeed, from this point of view the two terms appear to connote not levels of society but only universalisation and specificity. This is certainly not what the terms 'classical' and 'folk' in common parlance denote. In their original meaning they stand for a running path or stream along a highway which flows into a 'region', a locality, acquires a specificity of distinctiveness, and then continues flowing in a definite direction. In the course of its journey it does receive the waters of other streams or pools, but its own course of movement does not loose direction. The cognisance of the possibility of the *mārgī* becoming *deśī* at any given moment is inherent in the very nature of their relationship. If the one is celestial and the other terrestrial in 'śāstric' terminology it only goes to prove that the aestheticians were taking over the frame of reference of Vedic mythology in which the inter-dependence of the celestial and the terrestrial is taken for granted. We must remember that the analogy of the celestial and terrestrial whether in Bharata or the later writers was highly contextual and was loaded with reference to the three fires of the ritual, separate but all integral to the ritual. The celestial and the terrestrial are thus not to be understood as high and low in modern sociological terms. We have to consider the celestial and terrestrial also as the eternal and the temporal. Both were never considered exclusive, but inter-dependent. Just as God depends on Man and is the *Puruṣa* after the image of *Puruṣa,* so also the mundane and sacred are interconnected and mutually dependent. Indeed, we may go further and suggest that in so far as this is concerned, the categories of the secred and the profane are not exclusive categories, which even Coomaraswamy and Eliade seem to suggest. They are clearly differentiated in time and space, but are not mutually opposed, indeed, they are interdependent. The same space consecrated is secred, and it is mundane or profane at another time. Time too is both limited and profane on our level and consecrated, cosmic, on another level.

The Nāṭyaśāstra, the several texts of the *vāstuśāstra, śilpaśāstra* bear this out. The temple itself embodies both the sacred and profane aspects of life. The two are never in opposition. This is also borne out in the field of religion and social conduct by Baidyanath Saraswati in his study on Kashi. After an analysis of a vast variety of reliable data, he concludes that the two are not polarities but two sides of the same coin.

From the above, it will be clear that Coomaraswamy's very valuable analysis of the root word *mṛg-* and of *deśa* provides us with a significant criterion of differentiation of artistic levels. The 'runway' path, the directed flow of a river over a period of time with possibility of future growth and development, alongwith ever renewing chiselling refinement is characteristic of the first, the clearly defined contours in limited space and time with the possibility of stagnation and annihilation while providing the milieu for distinctive growth are the characteristics of the other. These however, are not equivalent to the categories of sacred and secular as suggested by Coomaraswamy. Dr. Sinha's hypothesis, inspite of sociological validity, is, alas, not borne out by an analysis of tribal, rural and sophisticated form of artistic creation. There is both a continuum and a dialogue.

This puzzling zig-zag of categories or of the co-existence of levels and of the inter-action and inter-penetration of levels can be solved only if we look at the Indian cultural phenomenon as a continuous movement of sheathing and of over-layering without annihilations and obliteration of levels whether in anthropological or sociological or artistic terms.

An analogy for this phenomenon can be drawn from the sphere of astronomy. Each cultural region may be seen as a sphere with an inbuilt inner structure all of which revolves around a regional axis. One face of this sphere is naturally like a disc. The disc has levels. These levels are naturally made up of races—linguistic, social and caste classification. There is a continuous dialogue which takes place between these levels in a given region. Certain aspects of life style of the people are shared whether it is at the tribal level or at the highly ritualistic Brahmanical level. Each of these levels of the disc may be identified in terms of tribal, rural (*grāma*) and *nagara*. A movement of communications takes place amongst these levels determined by regional axis. Alongside there is a second system of communication where particular levels interact with parallel levels in other spheres. The orbit is large comprising many regional areas, but there are micro-grouping and macro-grouping of contiguous areas. Thus there is a very clear connection between the artistic expressions of the tribals of Ganjam district, even the Juangs, the Paiks, the dances of Mayurbhanj Chhau, the dramatic techniques of the Jatra players, the dance and acrobatic techniques of the Gotipuas, of the Akharas and the Maharīs of the temples in Orissa. All these belong to different levels of society, but are held together by a regional style and channels of communication which can be seen in painting and architecture styles in these regions as also in Kerala. In Kerala we find the same continuum between the Theyattam, Theriyattam, Koodiyattam, Kathakali along with all the elements of commonalty, universality amongst sophisticated forms of dance, such as Oḍissi, Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak, and Maṇipuri, belonging to different regions of India. What is true of the performing arts is equally true of the plastic arts. While there is a connection between the simplest huts and agricultural field patterns and great architecture within a region, as in Bengal or Tamil Nadu, there is a connection between the tribal arts of contiguous regions and between the sophisticated arts of different regions. This fact is borne out by a study of architectural style and sculptural modes in different parts of India.

Within this orbit, one can discern a clear movement of the rhythm of a flow of a river touching each sphere or region giving it a distinctiveness at different levels and to the region as a whole and moving on with a uniform pace in time. The fixed centre which we had spoken of is still and changeless only in a very special sense of the adherence to certain principles remaining constant, invariable, but not in terms of an evolved form becoming static. The concepts of *śāstrācāra* and *deśācāra* or *lokācāra* and those of *mārgī* and *deśī* and finally of a *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* fall into a pattern where the members of each pair are distinct but inter-connected and mutually dependent. The sociological situation and spatial environment shapes them and gives them a definite identity in specific periods, whether it is in the context of the evolution of the *deśī-bhāṣās* or regional time-specific schools of architecture, sculpture, painting or music and dance, but these are inherently ephemeral, subject to change and flux. The chiselled sophistication which emerges has a continuum of the river and its course is constant. The pools are formed ; they dry up or become stagnant, but the river flows. Thus, while there is a multiplicity of pools or pockets in space and time, there is the continuity of the flow of a river. This movement pattern has provided the rhythms of continuity and change in artistic terms, whether it is at the tribal level where many changes are taking place in life style and artistic expression or at the urban level of a metropolitan city like Madras, where village and rural forms so to say are acquiring a different type of chiselling and sophistication, but are indeed not cut off so far as Singer rightly suggests from their traditional matrix rooted, if we may suggest, in village culture. In short, many things that we term as 'classical' in the modern sense, belong not so much to the city culture, but are renovated or restructured aspects of village culture. Contrarily many aspects of the high sophisticated culture of the past can be seen in forms which only in contemporary socio-economic terms belong to the tribal or the rural culture. We may call these survivals or continuities but they are certainly specimens of the highest artistic sophistication. These range from floor designs, paintings, terracotta work, music to dance performances.

The constant inter-changeability of the *Mārga* and the *deśī* of the *śāstrācāra* and *deśācāra* makes it clear that neither at the theoretical level nor at the empirical level have these pairs been considered as absolute categories and nor can these terms be equated to their English equivalents, namely theory and experimentation or classical and folk.

We have thus to re-examine both the Indian tradition as also critical writing in the English language which has constantly categorised the Indian tradition into the textual and the oral, the highly Brahminized, Sanskritized and the vernacular, the sophisticated, the literate and the illiterate, and finally the classical and the folk. Our analysis will have shown that at no point within the tradition, were these seemingly binary opposites really considered opposites They were certainly differentiated categories but placed either into a continuum or, as I have said earlier, placed merely as segments of a circle rather than a line. We could go on adding to the terminology and the conceptual models which have been used in English language for understanding the Indian traditions. A subsidiary pair such as *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* have been often created to denote idealism and realism.

If all that we have considered above is even partially correct, then quite obviously the distinction which is being made between idealism and realism does not hold good when we consider the concept *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī*.

The final extension of consideration of these pairs would be the religious and the secular, or for that matter, the sacred and the profane. This pair has been considered by practically every writer of religion, sociology and arts, and the Indian tradition has been divided into these two categories. A closer look at the level of religious institutions or artistic manifestations makes it clear that while in the Indian context there was certainly the comprehension of the *daivaka* and *laukika,* the *ādhyātmika* and the *bhautika,* these cannot be equated to the terms 'sacred' and 'profane' or religious and secular, nor were they insular categories. Thus to call India the *dhārmika* and the *dharmanirapekṣa* is a total misnomer.

One could go on multiplying these pairs of binary opposites in all disciplines in the Indian traditions and the English equivalence both in terms of concepts and terminology a hundred-fold. Perhaps it is not necessary to do so but it is necessary to realise that the conceptual models so far available to the sociologists or the art historians need further investigation and perhaps a re-formulation.

All that I have said above can be demonstrated through the empirical data which regions like Manipur, Orissa and Kerala provide where different levels of artistic manifestations as also religious practices can be seen in their living continuities. We can thus extend the terms *śāstra* and *prayoga, mārga* and *deśī* to spheres outside the arts and will probably be convinced that the tradition itself provided a conceptual model which can be profitably used in many spheres including that of religion.

II

VEDĀNTA AND SUFISM : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

(With Special Reference to Bengal)

Roma Chaudhury

Calcutta

VEDĀNTA

India, the holy mother-country of ours, has rightly been termed a "Sub-Continent". Really, how great and grand, how vast and variegated, how lovely and lively, how lofty and lovable is she, the Queen of all, in all respects. How very ancient are her culture and civilisation, how very profound are her philosophy and religion, how very beautiful are her arts and literature. Over and above, she is a glorious conglomeration of so many philosophical systems and religious theories, so many ethical injunctions, and so many social laws, manners and customs, so many rites and rituals ; so many sciences and arts, so many languages and literatures and what not.

But amongst all these various views (theoretically) and so many vows (practically), amongst all these numerous strivings and sacrificings, amongst all these multifarious interests and inclinations, shines forth, in eternal brilliance, in undiminished beauty, in unrivalled bliss, one theory and system—our very own, our very life and soul, our very blood and breath—the florious Vedānta, the very core and the kernal and the cream of the age-old exhilarating, exalting, enchanting message of India herself, all throughout the ages, all over the world.

Hence, no wonder the thrilling and throbbing Vedānta philosophy of India has not unoften been taken, especially by foreigners, to be the very voice of India, the very image of India, the very prop of India, bringing forth before the world at large the magnificient message of India, singing forth before the world at large the sublime songs of India.

Now, let us enter into little more details as regards the ways and means through which the different philosophical systems of India developed gradually throughout the ages. As everywhere, so here, too, India had a definite method of her own, pattern of her own, description of her own. What is that?

To understand this clearly, we must know something regarding the Indian scriptures, viz., the Vedas, forming the very basis of our very ancient and very respected culture and civilisation, philosophy and religion, ethics and sociology, vows and visions, aims and objects, dreams and desires, strivings and sacrificings etc. The Vedas, as well-known, are generally taken to be the four in number, viz., Ṛg-Veda, Sāma-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Atharva-Veda—though some are prone to omit the last one of the ground that its esoteric and magical leanings are not in consonance with the general spirit of the Vedas.

However, that may be, these four Vedas form the *mantra* or the Saṃhitās of the entire Vedic Literature; then, we have Brāhmaṇas, then the world-famous Upaniṣads, about which the great, yet by nature very pessimistic, the world-famous German philosopher Schopenhauer remarked feelingly :

"In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upaniṣads. It has been solace of my life, it will be solace of may death."

In this connection, we may pause a little to consider very briefly, as to how these celebrated *ṣaḍ-darśanas* or the Six orthodox or Veda-believing systems gradually developed.

The Vedas forming the basis of our age-old Indian culture and civilisation, philosophy and religion, ethics and sociology etc. are generally taken to have three parts, viz., mantra or Saṃhitās (Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva), Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. The *mantras* eulogising different gods and goddesses and the Brāhmaṇas concerned with rites and rituals, sacrifices and oblations form the prior part of the Vedas, called Karma-Kāṇḍa, while Upaniṣads, philosophical in nature, form the Uttara-Kāṇḍa or Jñāna-Kāṇḍa. The last part of the Brāhmaṇas are known as Āraṇyakas, which form the link between the ritualistic. Karma-Kāṇḍa and the philosophical Jñāna-Kāṇḍa. This Jñāna-Kāṇḍa or Upaniṣads are, naturally, called *Vedānta* or the "End of the Vedas". But later on, the term Vedānta came to stand for the philosophical system based on the same.

Now, after the glorious Vedic period, came the Sūtra period. As teaching in those days was entirely verbal and no printed books were available, the main teachings of the Vedas were summarised in the very convenient forms of short, yet profound aphorisms called *sūtras* (threads). All the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy are directly based on such Sūtras. Thus, we have Sāṃkhya Sūtras of Kapila, Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama, Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda, Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini and lasting the Vedānta or Brahma Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa, more or less 550 in number (555 according to Śaṃkara, 545 according to Rāmānuja, 549 according to Nimbārka etc.). Then, these Sūtras being so very brief and unintelligible, required further explanations and elucidations, and these were called *bhāṣyas* or commentaries. Further explanations and elucidations of the *Bhāṣyas* were also felt necessary and these were called *ṭīkās* or sub-commentaries, and so on and so forth. Of course, there were many independent works, no less—and in this way, the wonderful "Vedānta-Darśana" developed vigorously, with a never-failing inner strength of its own.

And in exactly the same manner, the entire Vedānta philosophy, with its ten schools, is based on these Brahma-Sūtras or Bādarāyaṇa-Sūtras. The wealth of imagination, the depth of feelings, the width of apprehension, and the height of realisation of the very wise propounders of these ten schools can well be imagined when we just think of this almost unbelievable fact of having ten different schools on the very same Brahma-Sūtras.

The ten schools of the Vedānta are as follows :—

(1) *kevalādvaita-vāda* or Absolute Monism of Śaṃkara

(2) *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda* or qualified Monism of Rāmānuja (Viṣṇu as Brahman)

(3) *svābhāvika-bhedābheda-vāda* or Natural Dualism, Non-Dualism of Nimbārka

(4) *bheda-vāda* or Dualism of Madhva

(5) *śuddhādvaita-vāda* or pure Monism of Vallabha

(6) *aupādhika-bhedābheda-vāda* or Adventitious Dualism-Non Dualism of Bhāskara

(7) *viśiṣṭa-śivādvaita-vāda* or Qualified Dualism-Non-Dualism of Śrīkaṇṭha (Śiva as Brahman)

(8) *śuddhādvaita-vāda* or pure Monism of Viṣṇu Svāmin

(9) *viśeṣādvaita-vāda* or Special Monism of Śrīpati

(10) *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda* or Inexplicable Dualism-Non-Dualism of Baladeva.

As in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, so in the Vedānta philosophy, too, two distinct trends of thought are found, viz. Monism and Monotheism.

Monism, as the name beautifully implies is a Doctrine of One reality, and not only of one God or the Absolute. So, according to this Doctrine, Brahman and Brahman alone or the Absolute and the Absolute alone is the sole Reality—*jīva-jagat* or this Universe of Souls and Matter is *mithyā* or False. So, according to this view, there is not only one Brahman, but also one Reality.

Monotheism is a Doctrine of one God only and not of one Reality, for, there is one God or the Absolute Brahman, but there are three Realities, viz., God or the Absolute Brahman, Jīva and Jagat i. e., Souls and Matter.

Of the ten schools of the Vedanta, only the first one, viz., the Adaita-vāda is Monistic—all the rest are Monotheistic.

Hence here, for want of space, only two systems of the Vedanta are very briefly considered, viz., the Advaita-vāda of Śaṃkara and the Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda of Rāmānuja, regarding the central topic of Brahman and His relation to *jīva-jagat*.

Kevalādvaitavāda of Śaṃkara

According to this theory, the first and the main characteristic of Brahman is that He is *ekamevādvitīyam* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 3.14.I)—One only without a second and all other characteristics of Brahman follow from the same. Thus, if Brahman be one without a second, then, He must be absolutely *nirviśeṣa* or without *viśeṣa* or *vheda* or difference of any kind whatsoever ; for difference implies that there must be at least two to be differentiated.

Now, in Indian philosophy, three kinds of *bhedas* are spoken of, viz. *sajātīya* or difference amongst objects of the same class, as between one tree and another, *vijātīya* or difference between objects of different classes as between a tree and a hill and *svagata* or internal differences amongst the parts of one and the same object as between the internal parts of the tree, viz., its roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits etc. Now, Brahman is all-pervasive and so, there is no question of *sajātīya* and *vijātīya bhedas* in the case of Brahman, there being no other God or the Absolute outside Him from whom He can have *sajātīya bheda* and also there is no Satan or demon etc. outside Him from whom He can have *vijātīya bheda.* But the special point to note here is that He has not even *svagata bhedas*—for, He is not a whole of parts, but He is absolutely *niraṃśa*—one and one only, with no internal parts (*aṃśas*).

From this, it follows that Brahman is *nirguṇa* or absolutely devoid of *guṇas* or *śaktis*—attributes and powers of any kind whatsoever, for these constitute the *svagata bhedas* of a thing and so, Brahman having no *svagata-bhedas,* has no *guṇa-śakti*-qualities and powers and so is totally and eternally *nirguṇa.*

From this, it follows that He is totally *niṣkriya* or without any activities at all. For activities imply *svagatabhedas,* as well as numerous other kinds of *bhedas,* viz., that between the agent (*kartā*) and his work (*karma*), that between the agent and his material and instruments, i. e. that between the *upādāna-kāraṇa* (material) and *nimitta-kāraṇa* (the agent) ; that between the means and the goal etc.

Again, an activity means infinite kinds of changes, etc. both from the side of the *upādāna* and *nimitta-kāraṇa.* Here the material changes and the agent who deals with the material etc. is changed. But Brahman cannot be subject to any changes etc. Again, the fundamental philosophical question may be raised. Why should Brahman act ? For, we act to gain something we lack, to attain an unattainable end, to fulfill an unfulfilled desire etc. But Brahman lacks nothing. He has no end to attain, no desire to fulfill. So, why should He act without a motive, like a mad man ? Again, the two main divine activities are taken to be *sṛṣṭi* (creation) in the beginning and *mukti* (Salvation) at the end, and He is eulogised as *sṛṣṭi-kartā* (Creator of the world) and *mukti-dātā* (Giver of Salvation to the Jīva). But if there be no Jīvas, all these never arise.

Brahman is also *nirvikāra* or absolutely changeless ; for a change implies either change for the better which is impossible in the case of Brahman who is the Best, all-perfect from the very beginning ; or change for the worse which is still more impossible in the case of Brahman.

Thus, Brahman is *ekamevādvitīyam, nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa, niṣkriya, nirvikāra, nirañjana.* Thus, Brahman is *nirañjana śūddham apāpāviddham* (Īśa Upaniṣad)—pure, sinless, free from all blemishes, sins and stigma and all-pure always.

All these are more or less negative descriptions of Brahman which is but as it should be, as it is very difficult, if not totally impossible, to know and describe Brahman through the ordinary worldly categories of substance and attributes, cause and effect, space and time etc.

The only positive description approaching nearest to His real nature is that well-known and universally accepted one, viz., that He is *saccidānanda-sat, cit, ānanda* or existence, Consciousness and Bliss in essence.

Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda

As expected, Rāmānuja differs from Śaṃkara in all these respects. According to him also, Brahman is undoubtedly *ekamevādvitīyam* (Chānd. Up. 3.14 I)—one only without a second. Still, He is not *nirviśeṣa,* but *saviśeṣa,* or He has, of course, no *sajātīya* and *vijātīya bhedas* yet, He has *svagata bhedas*—His parts, qualities, powers (*aṃśas, guṇas, śaktis*) constitute the same. And this by no means jeopardises His *ekatva* and *advitīyatva* (Oneness); for, He is one and one Brahman, but His internal parts etc. are by no means Brahman, e. g. suppose for example, in a garden there is a single tree, so it is one only and without a second there. Still, that single tree has numerous parts, like roots, branches, leaves, fruits, flowers. Each is as true as the tree, but who would foolishly call a mere root a tree?

So Brahman is not *nirguṇa,* but *saguṇa* or possessed of an infinite number of good, laudable, covetable, auspicious, heavenly qualities and powers and devoid of all bad, insuspicious, earthly ones. Again, He is not niṣkriya, but sakriya, *sṛṣṭi* (creation) and *mukti* (salvation) being His two main activities.

Again, He is, of course, *nirvikāra,* without changes, though He changes or is transformed actually into the form of the Universe of souls and matter. And, of course, He is *nirañjana,* absolutely pure, sinless, perfect.

He is undoubtedly *saccidānanda*—but the point to note here is that while according to Śaṃkara, *sat-cit-ānanda* : existence—consciousness-bliss constitute the *svarūpa* only= (nature or essence) of Brahman ; according to Rāmānuja, they constitute both the *svarūpa* and *guṇa*—nature and attributes of Brahman.

Relation between Brahman and Jīva-Jagat

According to Śaṃkara, strictly speaking, there is no question of any relation here at all. For, if there is only one object, one and one only, without a second, there being no other object besides Him, with whom can He be related?

Yet, if the question of relation between Brahman and Jīva-Jagat, which is so very important in Indian Philosophy, does arise then the only kind of relation possible is that of strict identity, i. e. Brahman and Jīvt-Jagat are absolutely identical with one another and due to our *avidyā, ajñāna,* ignorance-Illusion only, we take them to be different. To illustrate, the ether inside a pot (*ghaṭākāśa*) seems to be different from the ether outside (*maṭhākāśa*), but break open the pot, the ether inside becomes absolutely merged in the universal ether all around. So is the case here. Here, too because of the Upādhis, viz., bodies with sense organs. etc. the *jīva* or the individual soul appears to be different from Brahman and when the Upādhis are no longer taken to be real, Jīva and Brahman are realised to be one. So, the appropriate name of Śaṃkara's system is Kevalādvaitavāda, the Doctrine of strict Monism.

But according to Rāmānuja, the question of relation is a very real one, a very necessary one, there being three realities. Rāmānuja illustrates this by means of several well-known examples such as—

1. Cause-effect relation (*kāraṇa-kārya*).
2. Substance-attributes-relation (*dravya-guṇa*).
3. Possessor of power-power relation (*śaktimat-śakti*).
4. Whole-part relation (*aṃśin-aṃśa*).
5. Soul-body relation (*śarīrin-śarīra*).

Thus, take the ordinary case of a cause and effect relation, e. g., between a lump of clay, the cause, and a clay of jar, the effect. Here, the cause and effect are identical in nature. The cause, the lump of clay is clay in essence; so is the clay-jar. But the two differ in forms, functions, attributes etc. The lump has a round form, the jar an oblong one; the lump is soft, the jar is hard etc. so, they difer in forms, attributes etc. Again, water can be fetched in a jar and not by means of a mere lump. Again, the lump may be spread on the floor, not so the jar. So, they differ in functions etc.

Thus, the cause and effect are identical in essence (*svarūpa*), but different in attributes, powers etc. (*guṇa*). So, the relation between the two is one of identity-in-difference.

Again, in each case, the pair are inseparably connected with each other and this is called a relation of *apṛthak-siddha*. Thus, a cause must produce an effect, an effect must be produced by a cause. None is possible without the other. So, they are identical in this sense, too.

Thus, according to Rāmānuja :

1. Brahman and Jīva-Jagat are different in attributes (*guṇas*).
2. Yet, Brahman and Jīva-Jagat are inseparable or *apṛthak-siddha* and identical with one another in that sense.
3. Brahman and Jīva-Jagat are identical in nature (*svarūpa*) too.

Hence, according to Rāmānuja, though Brahman and Jīva-Jagat are different in attributes etc. (*guṇas* etc.), they are identical in nature (*svarūpa*) and so, they are inseparably connected and form the beautiful, synthetic, harmonious, organic whole or unity viz. Brahman. From the standpoint of *bheda* or difference, there are three realities-*brahman, cit, acit.* But *cit* and *acit* being Brahman in nature, from the standpoint of *abheda,* there is a single Reality–*cidacid-viśiṣṭa-brahman.* From the standpoint of parts, there are five kinds of Reality–root, trunk, branch, leaves, flowers. But from the standpoint of the whole, there is only one Reality–viz., the tree.

Hence, Rāmānuja's system is called *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda* or Brahman qualified (*viśiṣṭa*) by *cit-acit* just as a blue lotus is qualified by blueness etc.

GOD IN SUFISM

The central theme of the exhilarating Sufi system is, as expected, God. God, the only object to be known and realised from the side of thinking ; God who is the Be-all and End-all ; the only aim and the object ; the only fulfilment and fruitfulness, the only blessedness and blissfulness of one's life.

The first fundamental, final nature of God is His Unity: "See but One, say but One, know but One". (Shabistari's Gulson-i-Raj). Thus, God is one, supreme, sublime, eternal the greatest of the great, the highest of the high, the mightiest of the mighty with no equal or superior, with no parallel or image, no duplication or representation. He shines in His own undiminished grandeur unconquerable greatness, unimpeachable goodness, in one word, in His inconceivable, immeasurable, indescribable, immutable Godliness, entirely opposed to any kind of worldliness, as known.

Thus, God is without beginning and end, beyond the limit of space and time, unsupported, unconditional, unparalleled, unique, wonderful.

Transcendence and Immanence of God

According to most Sufis, God is both transcendent and immanent. It goes without saying that God, the Greatest, the Highest, the Widest, the Deepest, in one word, the Best of all beings, is, of necessity, omnipresent or all-pervasive—it being absolutely impossible for any one to think of Him as a narrow, limited being. Hence, He pervades every part of the Universe, of souls and of matter. He shines in every blade of grass, He smiles in every grain of dust, He plays in every molecule of atoms. What an absolutely enchanting, elevating exhilarating conception in this apparently material world of ours, in this apparently sorrowful souls of ours. There is really nothing but God, God alone. Lift up the veil of your eyes and see Him alone everywhere, inside and outside; see His *saundarya-mādhurya-aiśvarya*: beauty-sweetness-glory, see His *prīti-maitrī-śānti*: love-fraternity-peace; see His *āloka-amṛta-ānanda*: light eternity-bliss. What more is needed?

"Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden
The heart-ravishing beauty of the Beloved Face."
(Shabistari's Gulson-i-Raj, p. 17)

Yet limited as we are, limited as the world is, we cannot hold Him in us fully. What little we get is enough, fully enough for us, for, do we not get Him in our every breath, in our every drop of blood, in our every thought, feeling and desire? Undoubtedly, and that is our greatest boon, choicest gift, from God Himself. Yet, God is not fully exhausted in this one, small limited world of ours but transcends it far far above. So, God is both immanent and transcendent in the world; yet, not in it fully. So says Attar, the famous Sufi, in an apparently paradoxical way:

"The world is full of Thee; Thou art not in the world. All are lost in Thee; and Thou art not in the midst." (Attar). Thus, Sufism, generally, is a kind of "Panentheism", and not "Pantheism". Panentheism means that God is both immanent and transcendent; while Pantheism holds that God is wholly immanent in the world.

According to some Sufis, led by the great Ibau'l Arabi, God is wholly immanent in the Universe of Souls and Matter, and this school alone may be characterised as Pantheistic. According to this school God has three forms:—Pure Essence, the Universe and the Perfect Man—the link between the two. God is completely manifested in the Perfect Man who is the crown and end of His evolution and the sum-total of all His attributes. In this way, God and the Universe of souls and matter are totally identical with each other.

According to some Sufis, God is wholly transcendent and this school thus tries to work out a compromise between orthodox Islam and Sufism. Compare the following:

"He does not resemble creation in any respect and His attributes likewise do not resemble the attributes of the created beings." (Kalabadhi)

"He does not become immanent in things—because, then He must be homogeneous with them ; and He is not joined to anything—because then that thing must be a part of Him." (Ghazali)

According to some Sufis led by Rumi again, God is neither transcendent, nor immanent. nor both, nor anything intermediate between the two. For, He is wholly beyond all these empirical terms and conditions. As a matter of fact, God can be directly known and realised in "Mystic Union" alone but His nature cannot be expressed by ordinary worldly categories of space, time, causality, etc.

God's Attributes

Here, we have two main views :

1. According to some Sufis like Hallaj, Ibn Arabi, Jili, Jami etc. God has two aspects : (a) Pure Essence of simple Being devoid of all attributes and relations. This is the unmanifested state of God and called "The Absolute" and all His attributes etc. remain hidden in Him in a potential form. (b) Essence, as endowed with attributes etc. which is the manifest state of God, called the "Divinity".

According to some other Sufis like Kalabadhi, Jujwiri etc. God is eternally endowed with attributes etc. and never a Pure Being devoid of all such attributes. According to them, the above view is wholly untenable, as that would entail definite changes on the part of the changeless God.

Relation Between God and His Attributes

Here are also two views :

(1) According to some Sufis (Hujwiri) the attributes of God are neither identical, nor different from Him. Thus, we are here on the horns of a dilemma. Thus, if the attributes be identical with God, then, what is the use of calling them attributes separately over and above His very nature or essence ? Again, in that case, God becomes multiple in nature.

(2) According to some other Sufis. led by Pantheist Sufi Ibnu'l Arabi, God and His attributes are identical. Thus the Pure Essence of God is fully and exhaustively manifested in His attributes the sum of which is the Universe. Hence, God has no difference at all, neither externally, nor internally from His attributes.

Relation between God and the Universe and Doctrine of Salvation

According to Sufism, the highest goal of man or salvation has two sides, positive and negative. Positively it means, persistence of the self in God (*bagā*). Negatively it means, annihilation of self in God (*fanā*). Many different views have been held by Sufis regarding these two fundamental concepts. Four main views are dealt with here.

FANA AND BAGA

"Annihilation" and "Persistence'

First View : Identity neither in essence nor in attributes

According to the moderate form of Sufism, in consonance with orthodox Islam, *fanā* does not stand for "total annihilation" of the self in God ; so also *bagā* too, does not stand for total "identity" of the self with God. As a matter of fact, God and man are ever-different and the only possible relation between the two is that of a master-servant eternally. So, here, *fanā* simply means that the narrow, obstinate, arrogant self-will and false sense of independence of a man is totally destroyed ; and *baga* simply means that he feels himself to be wholly dependent on God, in absolute obedience and self-surrender.

Second View : Identity both in essence and attributes

According to the extreme Pantheistic type of Sufism, God and man are totally identical as man is but a sum-total of all the divine attributes coming out of the very essence of God Himself.

Several illustrations are given :

The relation of God and man is that between water and ice. Water and ice are really one and the same thing—only apparently different because of outer forms (jili). Thus, according to jili, the name ice is lent to the frozen mass whose real name is water. In exactly the same way, the name Universe is lent to the sum-total of God's attributes which is identical with God's essence.

The relation between God and man is comparable to that between water in the sea and water in the jug. If the jug be broken the water inside the jug will become absolutely identical with water all around. So, when man gets rid of his narrow, limited, body-confined Egoity, he also becomes absolutely identical with God.

The relation between God and man is that between the sun and its ray filtering through the closed windows.

Throw open the window and then the sun and the ray become absolutely one. So is the case here. Throw open the window of the narrow egoity or individuality and the man disappears in God.

The relation between God and man is like that between the sea and its wave. A wave is really totally identical with the sea—only apparently different in form. So exactly is the case here.

Third view : Illusoriness of the World

Some proceed of step further and take the Universe to be totally illusory or false. The illustrations given are: one spark of fire whirled quickly and so appearing as a full circle; mere echoes, reflection on water, one number repeated many times (Shabistari).

Thus, according to Sufis of this class, God and man are absolutely identical with each other both in essence and attributes. So, here *fanā* means annihilation of the human self together with its essence and attributes. *Bagā* means becoming the Divine Self together with its essence and attributes.

Fourth View : Identity not in essence but in Attributes

According to this school, during salvation of Mystic Union, man becomes identical with God in attributes only, somehow retaining his own essence even then (Rumi).

The illustrations given are :

Organism and organ, fire and iron, candle light and the light of the morning sun. It is comparable to the event when a piece of iron is put inside fire, it retains its own separate essence as a piece of iron and never becomes fire itself but only comes to acquire the attributes of fire-like redness, heat etc., giving up its prior attributes of blackness and coldness. It is further comparable to the mixture of Wine and Water, light and the carred moth (Hallaj). Thus, when water is mixed with wine it remains water indeed but only gives up its prior colourlessness and tastelessness and becomes red and sweet like the wine (Hallaj). So, according to these Sufis, *fana* means annihilation of human attributes only, not of human essence.

So, we have four main views here regarding the relation between God and man :

1. God and man are identical neither in essence not in attributes.
2. God and man are identical both in essence and attributes.
3. Man is illusory.
4. God and man are identical, not in essence but in attributes.

VEDĀNTA AND SUFISM

(A comparative Study)

It-is generally said that Vedānta and Sufism are very similar to each other. We take at random only one or two quotations to illustrate the point. Compare the following amongst numerous such passages :—

"The Mystics of Islam, known as Sufis, have so much in common with the Vedantists among the Hindus that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish their main doctrines from one another." (The Culture Problem, Oxford Pamphlet, p. 23).

"What Rumi said in Iran, Śaṃkara expounded in India, and the same was reflected in the European mind." (Outline of Islamic Culture by A. M. A. Shustarry, p. 450).

For want of space, let us here, attempt a brief comparative study of the fundamental problem of the relation between "God, Soul and Matter" and the connected topic of the "Nature of Salvation".

As we have already seen, according to the Sufis the highest end of man's life is two-fold-negative and positive. Negatively, it implies a complete dissolution of the narrow and selfish egoity of the soul in God (*fanā*). Positively, it means the subsistence of the real essence of the soul in God Himself (*bagā*).

Views of Moderate Sufis

According to moderate or orthodox Sufi, or Sufi trying to be in consonance with orthodox Islam, like Kalabadhi, Hujwiri etc. this dissolution or annihilation (*fanā*) does not mean that the real individuality or essence of the soul is dissolved in God. And subsistence or persistence also does not mean that the soul becomes identical with God in nature or essence and attribution.

Kalabadhi's View

As a matter of fact, God and the soul are eternally different and the eternal relation between them is a master-servant one. Hence, according to Kalabadhi, firstly, the term "Dissolution" (*fanā*) here means dissolution of all relations of the soul with the world, i.e., fullest detachment of the soul to worldly affairs and nothing more. No question can ever arise here of the dissolution of the soul of the devotees.. Even during this state of salvation the devotee remains there as a separate individual endowed with, all his human qualities. He is only no longer bound to his own body or the world by the fetters of its earthly cravings. To him, pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, gold and mud are all one and the same, and the entire universe is utterly meaningless or valueless to him.. That is why, although he is in the world, yet, he is not of it. Hence the world has become destroyed to him. That is, "Dissolution" does not mean dissolution of the soul but of desires for earthly objects. Again, subsistence or Persistence means staying as obedient to God's commands. Hence, no question arises of attaining the nature or essence and attributes of God Himself; the soul cannot even attain similarity with God not to speak of "Oneness". For, as pointed out above, annihilation means only the annihilation of total and eternal dissolution of all earthly cravings or eternal non-atachment to the world and its things at large. Again, Subsistence means complete obedience to Divine Will and attachment to Lord alone.

Hujwiri's View

According to Hujwiri, too, dissolution or Annihiilation never stands for the dissolution or annihilation of the individual soul in God, and the consequent destruction of its own nature or essence or personality and attributes. For the soul is a substance and one substance can never be dissolved into another, becoming one and identical with it. Hence, here dissolution or annihilation, means only consciousness of the imperfection of the self itself and the world, complete detachment to itself and the world and the consequent annihilation of its human attributes only which contaminate the essence and not of its own essence. Thus, such a man has undergone all bodily experiences, found them to be imperfect, unsatisfactory, transitory, and painful in nature, and so grown disgusted with them, and finally become absolutely indifferent to them. Hence, it may be said that he is totally dead to his own self as well as to the whole world. All his human attributes like attachment, choice, desiring a thing, striving for it, foresight, self dependence, associating with the world, being joyful, being disappointed and so on, disappear from him completely. As a matter of fact, all these human attributes are those in relation to the world and if the world ceases to have any meaning or value for him, it goes without saying that all his attributes and activities in relation to it must also become meaningless and valueless to him at once. Thus, if externally, all wordly objects cease to have any meaning or value for him, internally too, the attributes of desiring or striving for the same will cease automatically and simultaneously. Thus, dissolution or annihilation means the dissolution or annihilation of all wordly attributes and the cessation of all wordly activities through the growth of a strong feeling of detachment. Thus according to Hujwiri it is absolutely impossible that the very essence of a man should become nothing, a mere non-entity, or an entity merged into another. So, dissolution or annihilation can only mean, as shown above, that a man loses all wordly or human qualities and activities, retaining of course his very own real human nature or essence, individuality or personality. He remains a no doubt, yet not an ordinary man—a man without human qualities, activities, functions etc. Though still a man, he is beyond all human descriptions : "He is neither near, nor far, neither stranger, nor intimate, neither sober, nor intoxicated, neither separated, nor united; he has no name, sign or brand or mark". (Kashf-Al-Mahjub).

"Subsistence" further, does not mean subsistence of God in man. So, Shabistari says : "Some wrongly imply that annihilation means loss of essence and destruction of personality; and that subsistence indicates the subsistence of God in man. Both these notions are absurd". (Op. cit.). Thus, subsistence does not mean that God actually comes down to reside in the heart of a man, sharing his qualities and becoming mingled and linked with him. Really, there cannot be any such mixture and identity between the eternal and non-eternal, the uncreated and the created, the nominal and the phenomenal. Hence, subsistence means subsistence of man in God. That is, when a man's wordly or human attributes or independent will and efforts are totally and eternally annihilated, he comes to subsist only through the will of God alone and is completely controlled by Him. Thus, in short, annihilation (*fanā*) and subsistence (*baqa*) imply that in union, the mystic ceases to be an independent and self-controlled being (annihilation-*fanā*) and becomes a God-controlled being (subsistence—*baqā*).

Here, Hujwiri has given the illustration of "fire and iron". When the iron is united with or thrown into fire, fire can never change the essence, nature or substance of iron, How can it be ever fire? Fire changes only the attributes of iron such as solidity or coldness etc. and transmits its own attributes to it such as heat, light etc. In the same manner, when a man is united with God, his nature or personality is not changed, but his attributes, viz., independent will and desire disappear and God transmits His own attributes, viz., will and desire to him.

But here, a word of caution is necessary. It must not be supposed here that a man comes to be endowed with divine qualities as iron comes to be endowed with the attributes of fire, viz., heat and light. As a matter of fact, it must be borne in mind that there is absolutely no question at all of any identity of even attributes between God and man—they are entirely different both in nature and attributes. What the above illustration is meant to signify is, that just as fire imposes its own attribute of heat on iron and makes it hot by destroying its own quality of coldness so also God imposes His own attributes. viz., Supreme will on man and makes him wholly subservient to Him by destroying his own attributes, independent will and selfish desire. Thus, a man is always a servant of God, sharing neither His essence nor His attributes but being only controlled by Him. So says Hujqiri :

"Annihilation of attributes is possible only in so far as one attribute is annihilated through the subsistence of another attribute, both attributes belonging to man. But it is absurd to suppose that anyone can subsist through the attributes of another individual". Thus Annihilation and subsistence means the annihilation of human attributes of attachment and independent will and the subsistence of other human attributes of detachment and dependence on God. Here, the point to be noted very specially is that both *fanā* and *baqā* refer to human qualities. But the fundamental difference between these two sets of qualities is that the first arises out of its relation to his own wordly self and the world at large. But the second has not connection with the same and arises through the will of God though still and for ever human in nature.

Thus, according to Kalabadhi and Hujwiri, Annihilation and Subsistence mean nothing but the realisation of the eternal servanthood of man, the giving up of all independent desires and the dedication of all acts to Him alone.

Thus, according to the above view, of the moderate Sufis, trying to be in consonance with orthodox Islam, God and man are eternally different in nature or essence and attributes. Here, salvation or union with God means :—

(a) Total annihilation of wordly desires and total giving up of separate desires and enterprises (fanā)

(b) Deepest and most unselfish love and reverence for God and remaining as His eternal servant wholly. (*baqā*).

View of Pantheistic Sufis

According to the pantheistic Sufis, God and man are identical and man is the sum-total of divine attributes. In this connection, the view of the celebrated Sufi Jili may be considered.

According to Jili, the relation of the world to God is just like that between ice and water. That is, God is water, the Universe is ice and as such, the two are really identical. Here, water is the substance from which ice is made. Again, just as the name ice is lent to the frozen mass whose real name is *water* so also the name *Universe* is lent to the world whose real name is *God*. In this connection Jili, in a novel way, rejects two well-known theories, viz., the Theory of Incarnation and the Theory of Immanence.

Thus, first, Incarnation implies a difference between God and man. That is, it means that God manifests Himself in and through man and is, as such, different from him. But if we once accept the great truth that God and man are identical, then obviously no incarnation is at all possible.

Again the theory of Immanence, too, involves the very same kind of Duality. For here, too, we have to say that God is immanent in the world, meaning thereby that God and the world are mutually different. But here, we have to say that God is not immanent in the world, simply because He Himself is the world. The world is but the outer aspect of God, the other self of God, the mirror in which He sees Himself. Jili's doctrine, therefore, is not Pantheism which itself is somehow dualistic as it implies that God is wholly immanent in the world taking God and the world to be two different realities. His doctrine is rather Monism implying that God Himself is the world.

According to these Sufis the world is not at all false—just the contrary. For, world as the direct form or manifestation of God must be real as God Himself, just as the ice, a solidified form of water, must be as real as water itself.

Other examples given by the Sufis in this connection are :—

1. Sea water and water inside a pot (Attar).
2. The sea and its waves (Rumi).
3. A book and its leaves.
4. The sun and its rays filtering through the windows.
5. One, two (one plus one), three (one plus one plus one) etc.
6. A rope and its knots etc.

The sea water and the water inside a pot, the sea and its waves, the sun and its rays etc. are no doubt actually identical. Yet the water inside a pot, the waves, the rays filtering through a window, etc. are by no means unreal or false but entirely true.

Views of Monistic Sufis

But according to some Sufis, God and the Soul are not only identical, but the world is entirely false, an illusion and no more. In this connection the view of the celebrated Sufi Shabistari may be considered.

According to Shabistari, God created the world in order that He may become known. Hence, God, the Pure Being, reflects Himself on the Non-Being, like a mirror, as the sun is reflected on water ; and this reflection is the Universe. But who is to see and know this reflection? Man and man alone. Man is God's eye, through which He sees His own reflection of the Universe. But the eye to see requires a light. This light is not the light of reason, but God's own light through which alone can man see God in the Universe, in himself. Thus, God sees Himself through the eyes of man. Again, man sees God in the Universe through God, the Light. Thus, God is the essence reflected, non-being, the mirror, the world, reflection, man, the seeing eyes, God, the light of the eyes.

Hence, the world is not different from God, though it appears to be so, and is really nothing but God in essence. Thus, every atom reflects a Divine quality and when it gets rid of its narrow, limited, phenomenal character, it becomes one with the Absolute.

"Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden the heart-ravishing beauty of the Beloved's Face."

As a matter of fact, when the veil is removed, when all plurality i. e., all worldly objects and the self are annihilated in God ; God, soul, world, all become one and God becomes the sole Reality. Hence, the world of plurality is but a figment of imagination, a dream. So says Shabistari :—

"He saw that the world is an imaginary thing, like as one differed through many members."

"All these various forms arise from your fancy. They are but one point revolving quickly in a circle."

"You are asleep, and this vision of yours is a dream. All that you see thereby is an illusion."

A Comparison :

The First Sufi View

The view of moderate Sufis is similar to some extent, to the view of Madhva, the main propounder of Dvaita-Vāda of the well-known Panca-Vedānta-Sompradāya or "Five Schools of the Veānta".

According to this Sufis view, as we have seen : (a) The individual soul is always different from God, both in nature and attributes. (b) Even the freed soul, or one re-united with God, can never become identical with God in nature and attributes. (c) The freed soul or one united with God. is not only not identical with God, but not even similar to Him. (d) The freed soul or one united with God is different from God in nature, His humblest servant and dependent on and controlled by Him. (e) The distinction between the soul in bondage and the freed soul is not in respect of similarity and non-similarity to God, i. e., that the former is not similar, but the latter similar to God—for, as we have seen, none is even similar to God, not to speak of being identical with Him ; but it is in respect of dependence or non-dependence on God, i. e., the soul in bondage is completely different from Brahman, the freed soul, too, is exactly so. But the difference between the two is that the soul in bondage wrongly thinks itself to be independent of God and so, it has will and enterprises of its own and is not obedient to God and does not follow His orders. But the freed soul gives up all kinds of independent will and enterprises and is wholly obedient to God and follows His orders always.

According to Madhva also : (a) The individual soul is always totally different from God, both in nature and attributes. In this respect, these two views are one and the same. (b) Even the freed soul can never become identical with God, and be of the same nature with Him. But the freed soul at best, comes to be endowed with some of the attributes of God, i. e., the freed soul is like God, free from all sorrows and blissful. In this respect, the two views are different. For, according to the view of the moderate Sufis, God and the freed soul are different even in qualities and so even the freed soul cannot come to be endowed with some of the qualities of God. (c) The freed soul though not identical with God, is yet similar to Him, i. e. similar to Him in qualities possessing as it does, some of His qualities as shown above. According to Madhva, even though the freed soul is similar to God in some respects, i. e., in some qualities, yet, it is always different from the same. In exactly the same manner, although the freed soul is similar to God, yet, it is different from Him. In this respect, the two views are different. For, as we have seen, according to the view of the moderate Sufis, the freed soul and God are entirely different both in nature and attributes and so, finally, absolutely different from each other. But according to Madhva, the freed soul and God are entirely different in nature, but in attributes only partially, as the freed soul comes to possess some of the attributes of God. Yet, finally, they are absolutely different from each other. So, as regards the final conclusion. of course, the two views are one and the same, though the first portions are different. Thus, according to the moderate Sufis, the freed soul and God are totally different both in nature and attributes, and so, finally, they are absolutely different. But according to Madhva. the freed soul and God are totally different in nature and partially in attributes. Yet, finally, they are absolutely different. (d) In this respect, the two views are one and the same. In other views the stronger emphasis has been laid on a distant, reverential fearful master-servant relation between God and man than on an intimate and a loving sweet Beloved-lover one. Other Sufis, of course, have emphasised love more than reverence, ecstasy more than sobriety, sweetness more than awesomeness, nearness more than distance, intimacy more than dignity, emotionalism more than intellectualism. This characterise, undoubtedly, most of the Sufi doctrines. But the moderate Sufis who want to work out a compromise between themselves and orthodox Islam, hold that the relation between God and man must be a sober, dignified, calm, controlled, reverential one always. Madhva, too, subscribes to the very same view and upholds *aiśvarya-pradhānā bhakti,* instead of *mādhurya-pradhāna.* According to Madhva, the distinction between the soul in bondage and the freed soul is not in respect of non-difference or difference between it and God, viz., that the soul in bondage is different from God, while the freed soul is identical with Him. But the real difference is as regards similarity with God and dependence on Him. The freed soul is different from God, no doubt, but similar to Him, in possessing some of His attributes, as shown above and it is also wholly dependent on Him and obedient to Him. But the soul in bondage is different from, not similar to Him ; not dependent on Him, not obedient to Him. The view of moderate Sufis and Madhva are partially different, as regards the point of similarity with God.

The Second Sufi View

The second Sufi view is similar to Vallabha's view, to some extent. Thus, according to both the views, the Universe of souls and matter being a manifestation of God is indeed identical with Him to that extent ; yet, it is not false or *mithyā,* but as real as God Himself. Like Jili, Vallabha, too, holds that Brahman and *Jīva-jagat* are absolutely identical ; hence, *jīva-jagat* or the Universe of Souls and matter is not false, but as real as Brahman Himself.

The Third Sufi View

The third Sufi view, viz., that not only God and the Universe are absolutely identical with each other, but also, that the Universe itself is false appears to be very similar to that of Śaṃkara, but really it is not so at all. For, there are fundamental points of difference between the two. To note just a few :

1. Śaṃkara's monism is purely and permanently intellectual, there being no place in it of even religion, based as it is, on a fundamentally dualistic conception of difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. So, according to Śaṃkara, religion is possible and has value only from the *Vyāvahārika* or empirical standpoint—when *īśvara* or *saguṇa brahman* is the Creator and the object to the worshipped, while the *jīva* or the individual soul is the created effect and the worshipper. But from the *pāramārthika* standpoint, Brahman alone is real—there is no creation, no Creator like God or *īśvara,* no created effect like *jīva-jagat.* So, from this standpoint, there cannot be any question of religion at all, no question of a sweet, close, personal relation between God and the soul—for, here, the soul or

jīva itself is Brahman and so, it cannot evidently be a worshipper of Brahman.

But Sufi doctrines are intensely religious in nature and their main prop is religion and not philosophy. According to the Sufis, the eternal relation between God and the soul is one of the server and the served, the worshipper and the worshipped, the lover and the beloved and the like. Thus, what is *pāramārthika* to the Sufis is only *vyāvahārika* to Śaṃkara. As a matter of fact, Śaṃkara's theory is *śuddhajnānavāda*, a Sufi's theory—*bhaktivāda*.

2. In Śaṃkara's theory, there is not the slighest trace of emotionalism of any kind whatsoever. But devotion, love, separation infinite sorrows due to the same, union, infinite joys outpourings, ecstasy of the heart, emotional outbursts, intoxication etc. are basic facts of Sufism. But in Śaṃkara's system, these have no place at all, even from the *Vyāvahārika* standpoint, not to speak of *pāramārthika* or transcendental one. As we know, according to Śaṃkara, from the transcendental standpoint, there is no scope for religion at all—it being, by nature, dualistic. Hence, there is also no scope for emotional outbursts. But even from the *Vyāvahārika* or empirical standpoint, from which standpoint alone, according to Śaṃkara, religion is possible, the relation between God and the soul is not an emotional one, as between a lover and the beloved, but only a reverential one as between the worshipper and the worshipped. As a matter of fact, Sufi monism is permeated through and through with a sweet, soft, soul-stirring emotion of deepest love and closest fraternity, as between two lover or two friends. The two lovers e. g. are really, always quite different from each other yet, when they are moved with strong feeling of love, that passionate love, so to speak, brings them

so close to each other that they feel as if they have become identical with each other. So, this kind of oneness or Monism is entirely an emotional and so a subjective one. But the Advaita oneness or Monism is entirely an intellectual one, and although Brahman is taken to be *ānanda* or supreme bliss in nature or essence, there is not the slighest touch of what is called *rasa* or a sweet, amorous feeling here.

3. It is of course true that the Sufis do not remain confined in that dualistic stage of religion alone, but they rise also upto the stage of mystic union with God; but, so pointed out above, only on the passionate, intoxicated basis of untramalled fount of love or emotion of the heart, which has no intellectual element in it at all, being entirely "feeling" and not at all "thinking". All the Sufis have condemned "reason" in no uncertain terms and according to them, when reason is completely suppressed, the light of God gets an opportunity to descend into the hearts of the devotee and make the same realise his oneness with God Himself. The Advaita Vedānta as well as other Vedāntic systems discard reason as an appropriate instrument to a direct realisation of oneness with Brahman ; yet, the Advaita Vedānta never permits emotion to step in its place. On the contrary, it takes *ātmopalabdhi* which is the same thing as *brahmopalabdhi,* to be a matter of knowledge and knowledge alone.

4. According to Śaṃkara, this kind of unity-realisation is due to the efforts of the individuals themselves. There is no question of God's grace here at all. But acrording to Sufis, this kind of unity-realisation is the result of God's grace entirely.

5. For the Advaita Vedānta as well as other Vedāntic systems, the unity-realisation is entirely permanent in nature

and once obtained always remains-but not so Sufi unity-realisation, which being entirely emotional has naturally no stable grounding, and is, therefore, not at all permanent in nature. In Sufism, therefore, we find many instances of such sudden falls from the high, ecstatic states of unity to those of duality and the consequent piteous lamentations, repentences etc. Hence, even after unity-realisation the Sufis often come back to unity-in-duality, or duality-realisation only which is absolutely unthinkable in the case of the Vedāntists.

6. So, we find that in Sufism, there is a strange intermixture of philosophy, religion and mysticism. According to it, God and man are identical from the standpoint of philosophy, different from that of religion, again identical from that of mysticism. So, according to the Sufis, although God and men are different, yet they are identical-strange, yet apprehensive where emotionalism has the upper hand. Thus, to take a very common example, favourite or the Sufis, the devotee becomes merged in God wholly like a rain-drop in the sea—yet, strangely enough, ever remains a server of God, a lover of God engaged with Him in intimate, amorous conversations, and so different from God and endowed with a separate personality. Hence being mainly religious in nature, Sufism, though a kind of monism, is yet a kind of dualism or dualism-non-dualism, no less. But it goes without saying that in Advaita Vedānta, not the slightest trace of dualism is admitted.

Hence Śaṃkara's Advaita and Sufi Advaitavāda are different from each other in many respects, no doubt.

7. Advaitavāda and Sufism are both taken to be mysticism—as both deny the power of reason to be a real and ultimate means to a correct and complete knowledge of

reality. So here, the question is—if God or the Absolute is not emenable to reason as a means thereto, how can He be known after all? Now, here, according to Advaitavāda, although the realisation of Brahman is not a matter of reason, yet it is a matter of knowledge and it is entirely intellectual in nature, and according to it, there is a higher faculty than reason which may be called "Intuition", and through this alone, realisation of transcendental realities are possible. Now this kind of intuition, though different from reason yet not opposed to it may be called rather the best manifestation of reason though qualitatively different from it. But according to Sufis the realisation of God is due to emotion only, which is entirely opposed to reason. So, Advaita mysticism is intellectual mysticism, while Sufi mysticism is emotional mysticism; and for this, fundamental differences persist between Advaita Vedānta and Sufism all throughout.

Thus, if we undertake a comparative study of Vedānta and Sufism—what do we find? Undoubtedly, quite a lot of fundamental differences in substance, execution, spirit, outlook, standpoint and what not. Yet we find equally quite a lot of fundamental similarities—that great, pure, unselfish, intense, one-pointed love for man and man alone; the living, most perfect, most complete. Image of God on earth; that striving for union with God alone, leaving aside all greeds for all other gains etc. Are these not enough to bring Vedānta and Sufism together, in a very close relationship of complete understanding, mutual give and take and deepest reverence and purest love? Undoubtedly.

Vaiṣṇavism and Sufism

If anything, Sufism may be said to be similar to Vaiṣṇavism in many respects, mainly in spirit, standpoint and outlook.

1. From the standpoint of philosophy, both are dualistic, believing that God and Soul are eternally different from each other. Yet, from the standpoint of mysticism, both are monistic. That is, in a state of mystic rapture, in a state of emotional ecstasy, in a state of mental intoxication, in a state of sentimental outbursts alone, the two become identical momentarily or temporarily.

2. Both are mainly mystic and anti-intellectual systems.

3. Both emphasize the *Mādhurya* aspect of God more than His *aiśvarya* aspect—i. e., the concept of God, the sweet is more fundamental here than the concept of God, the terrible.

4. So, in both, the concept of *rasa, madhu, amṛta, ānanda, līlā, prema* or *prīti* etc. are fundamental. That is, according to both, the main characteristic of God is that He is juice, honey, nectar, bliss, play, love etc. in essence.

5. Both emphasize a very close, sweet relationship of love and trust between God and man. Thus, God is our *priyatama,* our most beloved, our *sakhā* or nearest and dearest friend and is not a distant deity, strict ruler, relentless controller of awe and reverence. (See 3 above).

6. Both emphasize the living, lively *prīti-bhakti*: love-devotion as means to *mukti* or salvation, rather than dry *jñāna* or knowledge only.

BENGAL

From time immemorial, Bengal has been a repository of the supreme and sublime systems of the Vedānta and Sufism, and we are all very happy to find that this has continued unhampered upto the very modern times. With no disrespect to others, we venture to say just a few words, in connection with the three main spheres of literature, philosophy, religion and politics.

Influence of Vedānta on Bengal Literature

The very first name that is suggested to our minds unanimously in this connection, is that of Rabindranatha Thakur. Every line of his very vast and variegated works (more than 50 huge volumes) breach of the Vedānta Vision of oneness, oneness of God, oneness of man, and the Vedānta Mission of love and service-love and service of God, the love and service of Man. That is why he saw God in nature and nature in God, God in man and man in God. God in all and all in God; and believed most strongly in the Vedānta ideals of unity and equality, love and fraternity, service and sacrifice—*sāmya-aikya, prīti-maitrī, tyāga-sevā.*

We do not know which to quote and which not from his innumerable songs, poems and other kinds of writings, for every one of these are living, loving, emblems of the exhilarating, exalting and enchanting Vedānta Philosophy of India. And, he also believed like the saints and sages of old, that though this Universe is apparently *sarvaṃ dukhaṃ, kṣaṇikaṃ* and *śūnyaṃ* all full of sorrows, all momentary, all void (as all were warned by Lord Buddha)—yet, that being due to our own *ajñāna-avidyā-māyā*—ignorance-illusion, to our own *vāsanā-kāmanās*—our selfish worldly desires and strivings, to our *ahaṃ-mamatva,* narrow egoity, the whole Universe of souls and matter is really and eternally nothing but a fount of the *amṛta* and *ānanda,* nectar and bliss of Brahman Himself.

Rabindranatha was very deeply influenced and inspired by the Upaniṣads and very often quoted and based his discourses on the well-known Mantras of the Upaniṣads, like—

1. *ekamevādvitīyam* (Chand. Up. 6.2.I)

   One only without a second

2. *satyaṃ jñānamanantam brahma* (Tait. Up. 2.I)

   Brahman is truth, knowledge, infinite.

3. *ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kadācana* (Op. cit. 2.6)

   By knowing the bliss of Brahman, one becomes free from fear.

4. *raso vai saḥ* (Op. cit. 2.7)

   He is supreme nectar (juice) in essence.

5. *ānando brahmeti vyajānāt* (Op. cit. 3.6)

   He came to know that Brahman is bliss. From bliss all these beings arise, in bliss are they sustained, to bliss they return.

6. *ānandarūpamamṛtaṃ yad vibhāti* (Muṇḍaka Up. 2.2)

   He who shines as bliss and nectar (*ānanda and amṛta*).

Only one enthrilling verse from the world-famous Gītāñjali

> *"preme prāṇe gāne gandhe āloke pulake*
> *plāvita hāriyā nikhila dyuloke bhūloke*
> *tomāri amal amrita pariche jhariā*
> *dike dike āji tuṭiyā sakala bandha*
> *mūrati dhariā jagiyā uṭhe ānanda*
> *hridaya uṭhilā niviḍa sudhāye khariā."*

> "In love, in heart, in music, in fragrance,
> in light and so in mirth,
> your pure nectar is falling down

flooding the heaven and the earth
breaking off all bonds on all sides
bliss is waking up with a form enchanting
life is filled up to brim
with nectar thick, enthrilling."

Influence of Vedānta on Philosophy and Religion in Bengal

In this connection, three main modern systems may be mentioned—

Brahmoism

Brahmoism or Brahmo-Dharma, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and codified by Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore. Maharshi reverentially culled many monotheistic Mantras from the Upaniṣads and thereby composed his "Brāhmī-Upaniṣad", the Scripture of the Brahmos. Hence, it goes without saying that Brahmo-Dharma is entirely Vedāntic in nature, specially of the type of Rāmānuja-Vedānta and the "Brahmo-Dharma-bījam" (in Sanskrit)—the very core and cream of Brahmo-Dharma was laid down by Maharshi after this system of Vedānta. Thus :

(a) Oṃ Brahma alone was in the beginning, there was nothing else. Then He created all this.

(b) He is eternal, knowledge, infinite, auspicious, independent, formless, one only without a second, all-pervasive, controller of all, refuge of all, all-knowing, all-powerful, true, full, incomparable.

(c) Through worshipping Him alone, earthly and heavenly well-being can be attained.

(d) His worship means—love for Him and performance of works dear to Him.

Religion and Philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest prophets and saviour of mankind preached a religion of synthesis, a religion of equality, a religion of seeing God in everything on earth and loving, serving, worshipping all as such.

Shri Ramakrishna by his world-famous doctrine of *"jatā mat, tatā path"*—"As many views, so many ways"—showed to the world that all religious systems are one and the same at bottom and in all fundamentals, however much these may appear to differ as regards external rites and rituals. So, according to him, as "All roads lead to home", so all religious systems lead to the same God, and he arrived at the most beneficial, most exhilerating most literal conclusion, not on the grounds of effusive emotion or sentimentalism, not on grounds of indirect, empty, dry, rationalisation or argumentation ; not even on grounds of soothing, serene authority or scriptures but purely and wholly on the grounds of direct realisation. For he himself took great pains and special care to probe into the matter directly, and then alone, on the basis of such a *sādhanā* and the resulting *Upalabdhi* or realisation alone, he proclaimed to the world hopefully and happily that all religious systems of the world lead to the very same goal, viz., God. Such a noble, genuine, liberal open minded theory is, indeed, very rare in the world. For the followers of each religious sect have a natural tendency to stick only to their own particular practices and hold in contempt those of others which leads to wholly unnecessary bickerings and bad blood, rancour and rivalry, misunderstanding and mistrust amongst different religious groups or sects. But Shri Ramakrishna with his wide, open, universal divine vision saw the fundamental truth, viz., that even when an object is the same, it may have different forms or appearances.

Again, Shri Ramakrishna's other theory of *jīva-śiva-vāda* is a very modern one and wholly a Vedāntic one too, i. e., look upon all as living images of God Himself ; love and revere all as such, worship and serve all as such and that will amount to your loving and revering, serving and worshipping God Himself.

But though a Vedantist to the core, the unique, wonderful speciality of Shri Ramakrishna was, that, to the fundamental outlook of his life, viz., synthesis, he never accepted only one school of the Vedānta, rejecting others foolishly, contemptuously and callously. On the contrary, he joyously and happily accepted all the systems and with his wide outlook and synthetic vision, worked out a perfect synthesis amongst them all. Thus, though an Advaitvādin, he was never a strict, uncompromising Monist like Śaṃkara, but gladly accepted both *śakti* or the Divine Mother and *bhakti* or devotion as a means to salvation which are absolutely taboos to Advaita Vedāntists. Compare the very expressive, excellent homage paid to his Guru or spiritual preceptor by Swami Vivekananda, his nearest and dearest disciple :

"The one (Śaṃkara) had a great head ; the other (Caitanya) had a large heart ; and the time was ripe for one to be born as the embodiment of both these head and heart, the time was ripe for one to be born who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Śaṃkara and the wonderfully expansive, infinite heart of Caitanya, one who would bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence."

Swami Vivekananda, as well-known, preached and propagated this synthetic Vedānta all over the world, starting from the Parliament of Religion held at Chicago in 1893. He liked to call himself "an echo" of his beloved Guru, and his sublime "Doctrine of practical Vedānta", making the lofty Vedānta enter deeply into hearts, lives of each of us and fashioning the same in the light of Brahman and His Sakti, the Divine Mother, is undoubtedly a unique one. Inspired by this supreme ideal of the eternal and essential divinity of humanity, he gave clarion call to all through his fiery speeches and writings :—

"All the powers of the Universe are already ours.... Darkness never existed, weakness never existed. We who are fools cry that we are weak; we who are fools cry that we are impure....As soon as you say, "I am a little, mortal being", you are saying something that is not true, you are giving the lie to yourselves, you are hypnotising yourselves into something vile and wretched." (II.293)

"Silly fools tell you that you are sinners, that you sit down in a corner and weep. It is foolishness, wickedness, downright rascality to say that you are sinners. You are all God." (II.236)

Not the very strong language he uses here, and this shows the intensity of his feelings regarding the matter.

Shri Aurobindo's System of Religion and Philosophy

The very same supreme and sublime Vedānta note is found ringing joyfully all throughout Shri Aurobindo's extra-ordinary religion and philosophy—the same universality of God, the same equality of man. Thus, God or the Absolute graciously, playfully, benignly comes down on earth through the seven steps of divine existence, divine consciousness, divine delight, divine power, mind, life, matter.

This is a process of descent or involution.

Then begins the inevitable process of ascent or evolution. For, as God is present even in matter, it cannot remain confined within its narrow limits, but due to the force of its divine potentialities, it has to rise to the next higher level, viz., that of life. In exactly the same way, life must rise to mind or to the level of man and man must of necessity rise up to become a superman and the remaining four higher and higher levels have to be reached by him, viz., divine power, divine delight, divine consciousness, divine existence.

This is a process of ascent of evolution and this completes the Holy Divine Circles—God to man and again, from man to God.

Compare one or two of Shri Aurobindo's sayings from his epoch-making work, "Life Divine" :

> "It is a necessity for the soul in the Universe to become one with Divine Being, to raise its nature to Divine nature, its existence to Divine Existence, its consciousness to Divine Consciousness, its delight of being to the Divine Delight of Being."
>
> "The natural man has to evolve himself into the Divine Man, the sons of death have to know themselves as children of Immortality."
>
> "As the individual developes, he moves towards spiritual freedom. As he moves towards spiritual freedom, he moves towards spiritual oneness. The spiritual oneness realised, the liberated man is preoccupied with the good of all beings."

> "Night is darkest before dawn, but the coming of dawn is inevitable. But the new world whose coming we envisage, is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern. It must come by other means from within and not from without."

Influence of Vedānta on Politics

It is generally thought all over the world that religion and politics are poles apart—not only that, also fundamentally and eternally opposed to each other. Politics is entirely empirical or worldly, religion just the opposite. Politics is based not so much on knowledge, as on cunningness ; not so much on trust as on treachery ; not so much on truth as duplicity ; not so much on morality as on prudence, not so much on self-sacrifice as on self-advancement. This is the ordinary view, right or wrong, and in any case, religion was regarded as something absolutely forbidden in politics.

But to our eternal gratitude Mahatma Gandhi appeared like a luminous sun on the dark, cloudy horizon of India with a new message of life and light, hope and joy, inspiration and exultation. And what is that magnificent message? It is the eternal message of India, always a land of synthesis and harmony, unity and universality—viz., that life is one whole and so the different parts of life, different interests of life, different ways of life are not mutually opposed, but form one whole, one beautiful, organic, synthetic, harmonious whole. Hence, no two spheres of life can be set apart from each other in water-tight compartments, wholly opposed. In fact, just as from a central core, all the petals of a lotus spread forth in different directions, so here, too, from the central core of life all its qualities, activities, interests, attempts, achievements arise.

According to Gandhi, the central core of life is one and only one thing—Truth or God. Hence, in politics, too, God of religion must have a central, honoured and eternal place, ethics too, and equally, and finally philosophy no less with its highest ideals of *satya-śiva-sundara*: truth-beauty-goodness. And we also know to our great joy how he actually proved the same by his historic, almost unbelievable war of Independence against the toughest, most powerful, most callous enemies, the Britishers—a war not fought with arms and amunitions, but with the lofty ethical principle of *ahiṃsā satyāgraha* (non-violent Non co-operation) and the whole world was astounded to see as to how "a half naked Fakir of India" led this unparalleled war to victory, a war based on the strongest moral and religious principles.

In Bengal also, the same picture is found. All the Bengal politicians, including, even the revolutionaries, were men of strict moral principles and strong religious sentiments, inspired by the supreme Vedānta ideals of seeing and serving all as God. Even the so-called callous revolutionaries were religiously minded and philosophically inspired—for the matter of that, by the sublime *vedānta viśva-prīti, viśva-sevā*: universal love and universal service, and they had a sword in one hand, but a copy of Gītā and Durgā-saptaśatī in the other, and before starting on their revolutionary activities, they always worshipped the Goddess Kālī.

(1) *Subhas Chandra Bose*

Let us take two cases to illustrate this—that of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Chitta Ranjan Das. Netaji, will be a very fitting illustration as his was, indeed a unique personality, a combination of the Congressite ideal of non-violence and the revolutionary ideal of violence or armed conflict, i. e., actual fighting on battle-fields. Still, he was from the beginning to the end, a true philosopher, a real religiously minded man, a strict moralist. As is well-known, he was a student of Philosophy with Honours and passed M.A. in philosophy from the Calcutta University. All throughout his most chequered career, he kept intact this philosophical ideal, this Vedānta ideal of seeing and serving God everywhere in the Universe.

His flaming idealism was well brought out in the historic letter he wrote to the Government of Bengal and his Council of Ministers, from the Presidency Jail, Calcutta on November 26, 1940 conveying his firm and unalterable decision to fast unto death if he was not released from detention. It was a long letter and only a few striking passages are reproduced here, as in illustration :

"Life under existing condition is intolerable for me. To purchase one's continued existence by compromising with illegality and injustice goes against my very grain. I would throw up life itself rather than pay this price. Government are determined to hold me in prison by brutal force. I say in reply, Release me or I shall refuse to live and it is for me to decide whether I choose to live or to die."

"Though there may be no immediate, tangible gain, no sacrifice is ever futile. It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper and in every age and clime, the eternal law prevails—the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church."

"In this mortal world every thing perishes and will perish. But ideas, ideals and dream do not. One individual may die for an idea, but that idea after his death re-incarnates itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas, dreams of one generation are bequethed to the next. No idea has ever fulfilled itself in the world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice."

What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task. What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over the hills and dales and over the broad plains, to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant land. What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one's own cause?

"Hence, it is evident that nobody can lose through suffering and sacrifice. If he does lose any thing of the earthly, he will gain much more in return, by becoming the heir to a life immortal."

"This is the technique of the soul. The individual must die, so that nation may live. Today I must die so that India may live and may win freedom and glory."

"To the Government of the day, I say : Cry halt to your sin for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the greatest crime, the greatest curse is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give life if you want to get it. And remember that the highest virtue is to battle against inequity, no matter what the cost may be."

"To the Government of the day, I say, cry halt to your mad drive along the path of communalism and injustice. There is yet time to retrace your steps. Do not use a boomerang which will soon recoil on you. And do not make another Sind of Bengal."

Is it the voice of a politician, or of philosopher? It is the voice of a visionary, of a dreamer of dreams, of an idealist, believing in the highest ethical ideals of service and sacrifice, *sevā* and *tyāga* : of a theist believing in God and His dispensations, believing in His grace and mercy, believing in His sense of justice and impartiality.

So, it cannot be denied that in Bengal too, even politics, the last subject to be thought of in this connection, was permeated by philosophy supported by religion, controlled by ethics—i. e., inspired by the Vedānta.

(2) *Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das*

Mention may also be made of Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, the political Guru of Netājī to whom he was lovingly directed to go when he after giving up his most coveted I.C.S. job, came at the feet of Mahatmaji for guidance.

As is well-known, C. R. Das was a man of great courage and his vigorous utterances in Law Courts even cowed down British Judges and Lawyers, not to speak of others. But still, his heart was full of supreme sentiments of universal love and universal service as envisaged mainly in our Vaiṣṇava Vedānta.

Again, it is well-known that of all the forms of Vaiṣṇavism, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism or Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism stands for the nearest relation between God and man as between *Priyatama* and *Priyā*—the beloved and the lover—a relation of absolute equality, nearness love with no trace at all of any awe or fear. So, here, there is nothing but the five exhilerating elements—*saundarya-mādhurya, rasa, amṛta* *and ānanda*—beauty, sweetness, juice or honey, nectar and bliss.

And C. R. Das, a fiery fighter (of course, through non-violent means) was merged through and through in the ocean of beauty, sweetness, juice, nectar and bliss. His well-known works life "Antaryāmī" clearly prove the same: Compare:

"I do not know how you my beloved
came to be mingled with my vision.
But now, it is you whom I see in every sight straight
Now it is you whom I feel in every touch in truth
Now it is you whom I count in every sum
Now it is you whom I hear in every song foresooth."

Is that not a very beautiful expression of the fundamental Vedānta maxim—

sarvaṃ khalvidam brahma (Chānd. Up. 3.14.1)
brahmevedaṃ sarvaṃ (Bṛh. Up. 2.5.1.)
"All this verily is Brahman."
"Brahman verily is all."

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava School

Of the well-known Five Schools of Vedānta, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava School is most prevalent. It was promulgated by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, nourished by numerous scholars and devotees and codified by the great Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa who supplied its basis in the form of the celebrated Govinda-Bhāṣya on the Brahma-Sūtra.

A very short account of the sublime system of Sri Mahāprabhu is appended here. The main problem of the Vedānta, as we have seen, is that of relation between Brahma on the one hand and jīva-jagat on the other and all possible views from monism to pure dualism, with different kinds of monism plus dualism have been held; and last of all, the whole problem has been logically given up, and refuge taken in direct realisation or *sākṣād-upalabdhi* and *anubhūti* which cannot and need not be demonstrated and proved on grounds of strict logic or reasoning. And this is the incomparable doctrine of Sri Mahāprabhu, Baladeva and others whose doctrine is appropriately called *acintya bhedābheda-vāda* (Doctrine of inconceivable Difference and Non-difference).

Yukti or *śruti* : reason or revelation which of the two is more reliable on extra-mundane matter? This has been the headache of all philosophers all over the world all throughout the ages. "Man is a rational animal", true. Reason is his special power, his most valuable possession-true. Yet, is reason wide enough to hold the All-pervasive, deep enough to reflect the All-high, strong enough to catch the All-powerful?

No, definitely not. Such is the firm conviction of many a thinker, many a devotee and no wonder, many a layman. And such is the view also of the celebrated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the great Vaiṣṇava philosophers of Bengal, in the midst of whom stands out the sublime figure of Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one of the greatest saints the world has ever produced, the idol of millions, the bearer of a new torch of hope and joy and at a time when real religiousity was being gradually dried up in the scorching heat of bombastic scholasticism and empty ritualism.

Acintya-Bhedābheda Vāda—"Doctrine of Inexplicable Difference and Non-difference"—such is the appropriate and expressive name of Srī Caitanya's novel philosophical doctrine. What does it imply? It implies that the fundamental philosophical problems cannot be solved by human reason. There are three great philosophical problems—that of Creation in the beginning; that of Relation in the middle; that of Destination in the end. Thus, first, how did God create the Universe of souls and matter and why? God is unchangeable; so, how can He be transformed into the forms of *jīva-jagat*: souls and matter? Again, God is All-perfect; so, what is His motive for creation? Why should He need the world, being eternally above all needs? Secondly, even when somehow or other, Universe of souls and matter comes to be created, how is it related to God? It must be non-different from God as it is inside God, as it is a transformation of God, and evidently there cannot be anything non-God in God; God cannot be transformed into anything non-God. Yet, the Universe must be different from God—for after all, God is God, we are we—who can aspire to be God Himself? But, again, how can *abheda* and *bheda* (non-difference and difference) co-exist? Thirdly, the very same is the problem of destination, salvation, too. Is the *Mukta-jīva,* freed soul, non-different from God or different? Both. But how? Reason fails to answer.

So, give up reason, rely on revelation, and have realisation. Realise your real nature, realise your inner-soul. That will inevitably point out to something "else", something "above", something "beyond", viz., God. Remember always that He cannot be denied. Just as you cannot deny the smiling sun above, just as you cannot deny the frolicking wind around, just as you cannot deny the dancing river below, so, you cannot deny God—never. You may not catch Him through *Yukti* or dry rationalisation, yet, you can always touch Him through *bhakti* or sweet devotion—your heart can advance boldly where your brain turns back baffled.

Such is the enthrilling message of Sri Caitanya—not a depressing doctrine of despair, but a delightful doctrine of discovery ; discovery of something in us that directly reflects the Light of God, that directly reverberates the Song of God, that directly reveals the Form of God.

And what is God ? God is not a distant Deity. God is not a rigorous ruler, God is not a terrible task-master ; but God is *amṛta,* God is *ānanda*—God is an infinite ocean of beauty and bliss, sweetness and softness, liveliness. He is our *sakhā* our nearest and dearest friend, guide, helper. So, we not only revere Him from the bottom of our hearts ; but what is more, infinitely more, we love Him with the whole of our being.

And so, we also love man, His loving image, and so, we also love the world, His glowing reflection. That is why, worship of God invariably means worship of man.

Such is the exhilerating Humanism of Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Humanism is ordinarily associated with Atheism or Agnosticism, which downgrades God to man, and sacrifices God at the altar of man. But this is a spiritualistic Humanism, which upgrades man to God and sacrifices man at the altar of God. Thus, it does not deny God to deify man ; but on the contrary, deifies man in the most literal sense, not as mere man, but as God Himself, as God incarnate, as God mundane.

What can be more exalting, more enchanting, more enlivening?

Sufism in Bengal

Bengal being a stronghold of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, was naturally attracted towards Sufism to a large extent. Historically, Sufism began to spread its influence perhaps from the 11th cent. A.D. and during 12-13th Cent. A.D. it was in full swing in Bengal. It flourished mostly in four centres, namely: (1) Varendra Centre comprising of Maldah, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Rajmahal, Purnea and surrounding places; (2) Rārh Kendra comprising of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura and Hooghly; (3) Banga Kendra consisting of Rajsahi, Pabna, Bagura, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dacca, Faridpur and Bakharganj; (4) Chittagong Centre consisting of Chittagong, Tripura and Noakhali.

In the Varendra centre, the holy name of Jalaluddin Badayuni, Alauddin, Nuruddin Alam, Shekh Husammudin Manikpir, Raji Hamid Shah, Sheik Biyavani, Sheik Khalil, Syed Nimtulla, Mulla Attauddin, Shah Ismail Ghaji, Bukhari Syed, Mardan etc. are well-known.

In Rarh centre, Makdum Shah, Muhammad Gaznavi, Anwar Kuli Havi, Pri Badar O Majlis, Shah Hamid Danishmand, Shah Sultan Ansari are well-known.

The Bengal centre, specially Pabna, Bagura, Mymensingh and Dacca contain many holy graves of Darvesa-s or Sufi saints whose names are not yet known fully. Amongst them Shah Muhammad Sultan Rumi, Baba Adam Sahid, Shah Sultan Balkhih, Makhdum Shah Daulat Sahid, Saiuddul Hrifin, Maulana Shah, Daulata Shah, Ali Bagdadi, Shahalnagar are well-known.

In Chittagong Centre, Sultan Bayazid Bostami, Sheik Farid, Badar Shah, Shah Pir, Shah Muhavasin Auliya, Shah Mulla Miskin, Shah Chand Aulia, Amanat Shah, Hamid Shah, Shah Mainuddin Shah Abdullah etc. are well-known.

All these Sufis, for the matter of that, all Sufis, all over the world, were wondering mendicants, who giving up their loving families and friends, their own secure social positions and economic affluences, roamed from place to place preaching and singing the holy name of God and His exhilerating message. They were all subject to intense emotion of love and respects for God and Man alike. They were very fond of music, both vocal and instrumental, accompanied by dances, and often fell in ecstatic trances while singing, playing and dancing in this way. They were absolutely free from sectarian orthodoxy or narrow racial prejudices of any kind. At that time, Tantrism of a worst type was prevalent in Bengal and the Sufis together with the Vaiṣṇavas strongly stood against the same and succeeded gloriously. As we have seen, the Vaiṣṇava and Sufi Doctrines were similar in many respects and through the combined efforts of these God-inspired, liberal-minded, non-sectarian, holy men, there resulted a glorious synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures during the 15-16th Century A.D., as found in the heart captivating, soul-stirring, life-inspiring songs and verses of such world-famous visionaries and mystics like Ramananda, Kabir, Nānak, Dādu, also in the famous Bauls of Bengal. That is why, the folk literature of those days are resplendent with maxims of highest philosophical thoughts, religious sentiments and ethical disciplines. The most celebrated Baul-concepts of *parān-bandhu* and *maner manuṣa*—"The heart's beloved friend", "The person after one's heart"—will stand for ever as highest example of what a common man can do and to what heights he can rise. Amongst numerous such Bauls or God-inspired, God permeated, God-given souls, the ever golden name of Lalan Fakir of immortal fame will shine forever as a most enchanting synthesis of Vaiṣṇavism and Sufism at their best and the grandest.

III

THE DUALISTIC CULTURE OF THE JUANG

Georg Pfeffer

Heidelberg (now *Berlin*)

We have come together to guard the memory of Miss Anncharlott Eschmann who was so suddenly taken away from us three years ago. I have been honoured to speak on this occasion, so I shall try in all modesty to meet the standards she has set. Miss Eschmann was of about my age and we jointly worked for the Orissa Research Project in the early seventies. She struck me as a restless researcher who would never sit back content with an answer that appeared to be agreeable. On the contrary, she would continue to probe into the subject, revise the results, demand new data, and dispute with her colleagues like any scholar would. Miss Eschmann also shared with me an interest in the tribal society. She made a number of attempts to link the local traditions in the tribal world with the Great Tradition of the Indian civilization. Today I shall undertake such an attempt in her memory, and at the same time I will discuss a very dry and technical subject of our discipline in such a manner that a general audience may profit. I hope to contribute a thesis which Miss Eschmann would have taken up, disputed, redefined, completed or falsified.

In other words—which she would have dignified by her scholarly attention.

My topic is the dualistic culture of the Juang who live in the Keonjhar District of Orissa. As a start, I shall introduce the problem in an anecdotal form so that not just esoteric anthropologists but normal people can understand it. Throughout my lecture, I shall also try to explain WHY anthropologists select such problems, HOW they work on them and WHERE they have met similar problems. You should also know who has worked on this problem before and who has led me to the particular questions. You may then form an opinion on the relevance of the issue and the size of the gap I hope to fill. But, of course, I must also introduce the Juang—your neighbours—and then I must mention a few other things of their world.

Let me start with the promised anecdote : Eight weeks ago on our way through the forested hills of Keonjhar, Mr. B. K. Behera of Utkal University, our Juang guide and I met another gentleman of the tribe who was greeted by our companion with a tender cheerfulness that struck us like a sudden sunray through the darkness of the jungle. After elaborate signs of welcome, my anthropological instincts were aroused when our guide introduced the friend as his *bokolap* or his grandson. The alert came because the men were of about equal age. But if you think I was surprised, I must disappoint you, for I was inquisitive enough to ask our friend, if he had a grandfather, an *aja* of the same age too. I received a positive answer. Exaggerating no doubt, I wanted to know if on certain special occasions such as marriages his so-called grandson, his so-called grandfather and he himself would jointly participate in public dancing, and again the answer was positive. I was assured, however, that "fathers" and "sons" were not present on such dancing parties.

So here you see the basic opposition of Juang culture, an opposition based on the archaic concept of seniority. Certain young and old people on the one side and certain young and old people on the other side conceive one another as members of different generation-sets, infact, as members of antagonistic generations. The respective opposite is thought to belong to the adjoining generation—that of fathers and sons—while the own group would include members of the alternate generations such as grandparents and grandchildren. A Juang can joke with females he calls grandmother or granddaughter, and frequently he will even marry such females and found a family. The father of Indian Anthropology, the great Sarat Chandra Roy, had noticed this proximity between alternate generations when he worked among the Birhor of Chota Nagpur.[1] He had even pointed to similar practises among the native Australian Dieri, but I do not know anybody who has taken up this direction later. It is my aim today to point to some of the anthropological significance of this closeness now.

To do so, let me tell you more about anthropological work in general. You may know that anthropologists like to run offl to the villages and tribal areas, but you may not know what on earth they are doing there. So let me assure you. Even in our discipline aims and techniques differ widely. Most of the older German colleagues, for example, want to write histories of people without written records. Tracing links between different regions and continents is their pasttime, and they do this on the basis of material artefacts or by comparing institutions of different cultures.

---

[1] S. C. Roy: *The Birhors.* Ranchi 1925, p. 136.

Other anthropological historians search for evolutionary sequences, or different stages of human development which are marked by a successively growing gap between the material manner of providing one's livelihood on the one side and the societal or metaphysical explanation of this livelihood on the other side. We talk of a *primitive* culture if its members face little difficulties to explain why and how they exist. On the other extreme, members of developed cultures must invest great efforts to explain or justify their mode of life.

A third approach, the functional school of anthropology, does not bother about history or "historical conjectures". These scholars want to understand the operations of strange socio-economic systems here and now. They would—for example—want to know how an Indian tribe such as the Juang tribe can retain its identity without any type of internal government, without a central administration.

Finally I must mention a school which is popular in France since some time. The so-called structuralists select data from "real life" to formulate holistic models of elementary ideas which sum up the ideological essence of a particular culture. Such abstractions to them seem to be more real than the reality we can see and feel. The models are always based upon the cerebral technique to divide and find opposites, to operate with dichotomies or binary concepts such as *pakki* and *kachhi, dharma* and *artha* or heaven and hell, to give a few examples. Rodney Needham of Oxford has stressed these cerebral techniques when he spoke of social anthropology as "the empirical study of human understanding by means of the comparative study of cultural categories".[2]

In Indian anthropology, Louis Dumont of Paris has represented this structuralist school with undisputed mastery. Before he dealt with caste, he laid the foundation for all serious studies of Indian kinship by comparing the systems of south India with those of the north. The marriage rules of these regions differ markedly : In the south, a person should reenforce the marriage of his parents by joining with the same group his father had selected. You may know these options from the Ganjam and Koraput Districts of southern Orissa. People there will like to marry their *mamu*'s daughter or their *phupha*'s son.

In most of Orissa just as in northern India, any link with such as close relative is strictly forbidden. The spouse must be a stranger. Dumont's really interesting thesis, however, shows the difference to be smaller than expected at first sight. Northern rules and northern Sanscritic terminologies are exposed to be foreign. But they are in contrast to the factual kinship structures we observe in gift-exchange and various ritual procedures.[3] A submerged binary classification is identified in this sphere. . ..

Dumont's grand scheme is not followed by the other outstanding anthropologist dealing with Indian kinship, by Kathleen Gough of Vancouver in Canada. Dr. Gough sees the "Dravidian" opposition of marriagable and non-marriagable relatives to be the result of some historical development. She speculates about a "proto-Dravidian type" marked by "dual division"[4] as the predecessor of the "Dravidian" system, we may even meet in southern Orissa. "Dual division" implies the societal whole to be divided into two opposite halves or moieties, as our jargon would call this opposition.

---

[2] R. Needham : Terminology and Alliance. I. Garo, Manggarai. in : *Sociologus*, 16, 1966, 141–157.

[3] L. Dumont : Marriage in India : the present state of the question. North India in relation to south India. in : *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 9, 1966, 90–114.

Until now you had to suffer a lengthy and yet sketchy introduction into the discipline. I must therefore provide you with my simple clue: The Juang of Orissa represent such a "proto-Dravidian" ethnic group. They display all the features of a dualistic classification as presumed by Gough. I hope to introduce these features to you along with the links to the southern and northern systems. Doing so, I shall argue as a functionalist with structural visions to underscore historical assumptions.

But initially more must be said about the Juang, as they are presented to us in the works of Elwin, McDougal and Rout.[5] Personally I could only stay in the Juang area for some two weeks in order to check those data I had used for my analysis.

---

[4] E. K. Gough Aberle: *Dravidian Kinship and the Mode of Production,* New Delhi, 1978.

[5] V. Elwin: Notes on the Juang. in. *Man in India* XXVIII, 1948.

Ch. McDougal: *The Social Organization of the Hill Juang.* Unpubl. Ph.D.—Dissertation of the University of New Mexico 1963.

Siba Prasad Rout: Handbook of the Juang. in: *Adibasi,* 1969/1970.

The Juang are said to count more than 20,000 members who live in the Keonjhar Hills on the Dhenkanal border. Their numbers have been decreasing—not increasing—over the last decades. They speak a language of the Southern Munda group and Christian Missionaries have not contacted them so far. As a result, their faith in the earth goddess and the sun god has remained intact.

The Juang are swidden cultivators. Very sparingly, they use the forest wealth their ancestors have left to them. Accordingly, you will not find soil erosion in their country. The lie of the British administrators, the lie that swidden cultivation is "wanton destruction of forest wealth" can be exposed easily in Keonjhar. Nobody cares so much for the forest as the Adibasi do. In fact they worship the forest, their reliable patron since time immemorial, while modern agencies are less dependable. For though some government schemes provide the Juang with what today is called "unit of poultry" or "unit of goatry", other agents of the civilization supply themselves with "units of poultry" from the Juang villages. One influence evens out the other. The analogy to "foreign aid" of the rich countries to the Third World is not too far fetched.

In these few remarks you may have discovered the typical dilemma of anthropological research : One goes out to study the "binary structures" and meets people. One is struck by strange institutions to be studied, but confronted in real life with precarious modes of existence. Questions about the ultimate utility of theoretical concepts are bound to be raised under such conditions. Rather simplistically, I can only answer that any cultural study will show that the culture studied is taken seriously, is recognized as such. To say so means to point to circumstances which deny this simplistic assumption.

If we probe into the "world of ideas", we may also recognize obstacles to technological development, the usual common-sense approach would ignore. We could thus avoid the arrogance of those technologically oriented outsiders. We might, for example, not go so far as to address worthy old gentlemen with *pila* or "children", and we might avoid the stereotype of the innocent but dumb Adivasi which is so common. We could thus avoid the embarrassing observation that Juang children have reasons to run away from school just as adults shun any sort of wage-labour.

To return to their social organization : Like other tribes, the Juang are subdivided into various clans but these are practically unimportant. They could be dispensed with, as they are apparently among some Konds of the Nua Gaon Block, for the local groups and villages are much more important and so is the idea of generation.

Dumont[6] calls the age system the most archaic criterion of social organization. Those of you acquainted with Australia will find it operating there. The difference between the young and the old is the starting point of all classification among the Juang. Successive generations are clearly marked and heavy sanctions follow any attempt to violate the border between them. For the concept of generation is reified in two different ways which we should find the patience to understand. *First* there is a visible generation border, while the *second* concept is purely ideological. Let us begin with the first line: The unmarried young people who dance and sing in the evenings and who no longer sleep in their parental homes have various ritual obligations which the married house-holders cannot fulfill. The latter are polluted in their worldly attachments. But those elders beyond house-holder duties, i. e. those who have adult children, are pure again to unite with the youths in ritual services. The ritual leader and instructor is the *nagom*, his assistant the *ordan*. Both jointly oppose the younger married men but unite with the unmarried youths of the dormitory.

---

[6] See L. Dumont : Descent or Intermarriage ? A Relational View of the Australian Section Systems. in : *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, 22, 1966, 231-250.

The confrontation can be understood easily: on the one hand elders "beyond good and evil" associate with the innocent youngsters while on the other hand the secular leaders meet separately to discuss mundane affairs over a pot of rice-beer.

Even at this stage, we seem to notice the *cyclical* character of this opposition between the old and the young. Alternate age-groups, the young and the very old, combine against the middle group. This clearcut visibility of the generational difference disappears, however, in the second, the ideological concept of generation.

In the latter scheme, age difference is no longer a biological fact. It is something society postulates as a fact, something which could not be recognized as such without the societal definition. I said clans were unimportant. I now say how important generation is for social classification.

The Juang register precisely who among them belongs to what type of generation, an adjacent or an alternate one.

The simplest way for us to understand the difference is to imagine a theoretical generation No. 1 and then join all subsequent odd numbered ones along with it. All even numbered generations would jointly oppose the odd ones.

The Juang have kept up this type of division since time immemorial. Therefore an individual member of the tribe today can classify others up to six or seven generations removed. The generational "timing" has not been working in simultaneous "shifts" through the centuries, so the theoretical "contemporaries", i. e. those of the same generational "number", no longer coexist as they should in a neat theory. Generations have in fact fanned out physically. They are initial indicators of classificatory limits of the concept. But for the time being—and within Juang isolation—the dualistic distinction as such as upheld, even if it no longer coincides with the physical difference of old and young. One medium to support this relativism is the kinship terminology: a Juang's great-grand-father, for example, is referred to by the same term as his father's brother or his brother's son. All are named *atir*. All are classified jointly, whether they are removed for three or for one of the generations, whether they came before the speaker or succeed him. All people of his village appear as his relatives, so all classed like his *atir* qualify as *atir*. To avoid confusing living persons, the suffix *-kon* (meaning "young") is added in references to those physically younger.

Of any individual Juang, these *atir* will always constitute the opposite age-group. In his own generation (or those with even numbers) he distinguishes those older by male or female terms with the root *aj-* and those younger by those terms with the root *bok-*. We find *aji* to mean "father's father's sister" therefore as well as "elder sister", or *boko* and *bokolap* to mean "younger brother" and "son's son". In similar generational units the relatives by marriage whom the inhabitants of coastal Orissa would call *bondhu* are classed in generational units: a woman classed as *na* is the grandfather's wife or my own potential spouse, "mother" and "son's wife" are both called *bwinki*. So the terminology units alternate generations and opposes the adjacent ones. Not just individuals but whole villages are collectively classified in this way. In this manner, a person only slightly senior may be called "grandfather" to reciprocate with the term "grandson".

Having explained the unusual Juang dualism, I can come to the one usual in these coastal areas as well: all over Orissa relatives by marriage are called *bondhu* and those "by blood" which most of you would call *gainti* (consanguines) the Juang would refer to as *kutumb*. Any single Juang would in fact subdivide his home in Keonjhar into villages which for him are either *bondhu* or *kutumb*. There is no third category. The latter—his declared kin—rarely have any sort of relations with him, while vivid exchanges do occur between members of *bondhu* villages.

Keeping in mind these *two* dualisms—that of generation and that created by marriage—one should imagine a fourfold subdivision of the Juang would emerge in the perspective of any individual. Let me illustrate this idea by abbreviating *bondhu* and *kutumb* with the letters B and K and by numbering the generations. Any K1 would always marry a B1 woman and vice versa. The children would become K2 and B2 respectively, and their children would again swell the numbers of K1 and B1. The anthropologists are now likely to recognize the "Kariera" type of arrangement well-known from the text-books. This similarity would be quite spectacular for the discipline, but the reality is even more exciting: in the perspective of an individual the Juang tribe is segmented into eight rather than four such segments. In fact the mechanisms of the so-called "Aranda"—system operate at this analytical level in the way we know from Australian anthropology. I am happy to inform you that you are the first audience to be confronted with this thesis.

If I was very overbearing, I would even argue the case of a sixteen-fold system in Keonjhar, as the Juang happen to be only one half of the tribal population in the hills. The other half is made up by the Bhuiyan tribe similarly organized. Seen by themselves and by the Juang, the Bhuiyan figure as the "senior siblings" of the Juang sharing the same land but keeping to those rules of mutual avoidance appropriate for seniors and juniors.

The more modest view of eight subdivisions shall be explained now. As I had pointed out, any individual identifies himself with grandfathers and grandsons. Therefore, his or her marriage should be organized in the way those of the alternate generations are. So if a father of K1 marries a woman of B1 to have a son marked as K2, this son must marry into a different *bondhu* category than his mother of B1. To signify the difference this other category will be called BO rather than B. As K2 must mate within his generation, he will have to choose someone of BO2! Similarly B2 cannot marry any K category. To differentiate from the previous generation, someone we may assign the abbreviation KU may be chosen, and of course it must be a KU2. Consequently, the children of K1 and B1 as K2 would mate with BO2 and as B2 with KU2. Their children are again bound to repeat the ties of the grandparental generation. It is therefore necessary to add two more categories to the six mentioned, i. e. those of KU1 and BO1 who "exchange sisters" in the generation mentioned first. The formula would thus read :

K1=B1 BO1=KU1

K2=BO2 B2 =KU2

K1=B1 BO2=KU2

These eight categories appear as groups "on the ground" in the life of an individual, for example, in marriage ceremonies. These categories are also deliniated by the kinship terminology, but this could be illustrated only by dry and complex deliberations. So it may suffice to point to the fact that the *mamu* or maternal uncle may never give his daughter to his sister's son in marriage. Terminology excludes such a possibility, though the practise of such a marriage may happen. It would, however, also be a breach of the legal code among the Juang. Norms and terminology jointly operate to the same effect, as the uncle's daughter is named "senior sibling". This name implies the avoidance demanded by law.

Using the four anthropological approaches I mentioned initially, one can now see with functionalist "spectacles" how the remote community of the Juang manage to exist in an orderly manner without a central administration. Breaches of the norms may be followed by the heaviest sanctions : the boykott of intermarriage.

The historical school is likely to point to the positive marriage rules of the Juang which differentiate them from the systems of northern India but point to similarities in the southern regions of the subcontinent where terminologies and rules demand particular marriage alliances. In fact I found the southern custom of the so-called "cross-cousin marriage" among the Oraon and Kisan, that is, among speakers of Dravidian languages in the Chota Nagpur area or the immediate neighbourhood of the Juang.

Following evolutionist considerations, we can see how a simple device, the concept of generation combined with marriage, suffices to organize tens of thousands of our contemporaries, as long as their technological standards are quite simple. Most members of the tribe will be able to understand the device and to consider it to be "natural" or not dependent upon lengthy legitimations. Such problems arise with technological development.

All these avenues of analysis are opened through the structuralist approach. Thereby we can identify the two binary oppositions. Like most other Indians, the Juang juxtapose kin and affines, but beyond this, they further classify in another elementary opposition confronting young and old mundane and innocent or polluted and pure.

IV

THE *VANA* AND THE *KṢETRA* :

THE TRIBAL BACKGROUND OF SOME FAMOUS CULTS

GUENTHER-DIETZ SONTHEIMER

Heidelberg

The world of tribals and their religion as well as Indian folk religion in general have become an important subject for the indologist who has hitherto emphasised the study of classical languages and literature. The tribal world has ceased to be the exclusive domain of the social anthropologist or ethnologist. Similarly the ethnologist has to understand the wider context of the tribal community, that is the 'Great Tradition' of India. For example, Lord Jagannāth combines the tribal world, the mythology of the Purāṇas, the Pañcarātra ritual and he even admits of the highest philosophical interpretation.[1] In fact, whatever one may discern in the continuum from tribal belief to the highest philosophy is concentrated in the Jagannāth cult. It is a good example to illustrate the speciality of Indian culture : the *unity* of different aspects or levels of Hinduism connentrated in one cult and the nearly uninterrupted continuity from tribal beliefs to the highest philosophy.

---

[1] See, e. g., Eschmann, A., "Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa, The Śākta and Śaiva Typology", in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannāth and the Regional Tradition of Orissa,* Delhi, 1978, pp. 78ff, p. 85. For a philosophical interpretation see G. C. Tripathi, "Jagannātha : The Ageless Deity of the Hindus", in Anncharlott Eschmann, etc. (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannāth*..., Ch. xxv.Id., "The Influence of Some Philosophical Systems on the Mode of

It has since long been also acknowledged that the tribal world and the villages of India may reveal to us different facets of India's past, leading us to earlier stages of Indian culture right into prehistory. It was D.D. Kosambi, the famous historian, who said long ago that 'history is to be seen displayed in full detail in the villages of India—provided one has the vision and insight required to read that history'.[2] Anncharlott Eschmann always realised this necessity of understanding the *origins* of religion in areas off the beaten track.

The evolution of the cult of a deity, e. g. is a fascinating study. The deity passes through several stages, but its beginning, for instance, as a mountain spirit or a hunters' patron deity is still preserved. The emphasis in religious beliefs may shift, but the original core is still preserved. The god may have two shrines : the original one in the forest and one in the village. The forest shrine does not lose its importance, whatever may be added to the cult.

Worship of Kṛṣṇa-Jagannātha", in *Zeitschrift für Religions-und Geistesgeschichte,* 27 (1975), pp. 206–221.

[2] D. D. Kosambi, *History and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline,* London, 1965, p. 22. Cited by Jayakar, Pupul, *The Earthen Drum. An Introduction to the Ritual Arts of Rural India.* National Museum, New Delhi 1981, p. viii.

No doubt this unity is a compartmentalized unity. This 'unity in diversity' is achieved not by abolition of the original cult *per force*, but by 'incorporation' and 'subordination' or by what P. Hacker has called 'Inklusivismus'.[3] As is well known, Hinduism is said to have actually no dogma and and no creed. If there had been dogmatic beliefs propagated by an organized church in the western sense there would probably be no necessity for the indologist to study folk religion and tribal religion. He could stick to his texts. Though the traditional method of the Brahmin author, whether sectarian or non-sectarian, would distingguish, evaluate and edit the raw material of 'primitive' beliefs and 'unreflected instincts', giving them a new 'prestige-worthy' interpretation, if not a new meaning, the sharp distinction between 'superstition' and 'belief' was absent. The beliefs of others—as, for instance, those of the tribals—may be admitted by the Hindu interpreter to be a way to God, though he may view them as a little less valid than his own. This attitude is as old as the *Bhagavadgītā* (IX.23). It has been argued that there is no traditional word in any Indian language for 'superstition' and new terms had to be created, e.g. *andhā śraddhā*.[4] It was probably only after western influence had gained wider acceptance that this distinction was introduced and the difference was accentuated. Tribal beliefs today tend to be rejected *a priori* as primitive, immoral, anachronistic, and as *andhā śraddhā*. There are still few today who respect tribal customs and their religious beliefs—as long as they don't interfere with what the Indian Constitution (Art. 26) calls 'public order, morality, and health'—as a cherished treasure in the face of the superficiality and conformism of the modern world. We may cite here Sitakant Mahapatra. In an article entitled 'The Tribal World and the Small Community' he wrote *inter alia*: "It has been the greatness of the Indian nation that it has always thought to create [such] a living and growing community which is in essence a community of communities." And further he said: "Technology and tribal cultures are in need of each other today. At the heart of each is an emptiness—a cultural anomie and blankness on the one hand and stark unmitigated poverty and a lack of formal organization, on the other. An exclusive emphasis on the former has led to a loss of the sense of community and a desparate search for alternatives in the West. May be, if we continue to cherish the value of traditional 'little' culture as the bond that keeps men together in small communities, we may not be required to trudge the same troubled way of the West as we advance economically."[5]

---

[3] Paul Hacker, "Religiöse Toleranz und Intoleranz im Hinduisms", in Lambert Schmithausen (ed.), *Paul Hacker, Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden, 1978, pp. 376ff. Cp. R. Burghart, "Hierarchical Models of the Hindu Social System", in *Man* (N.S.), Vol. 13, pp. 519–536.

[4] See Agehananda Bharati, "Hinduism and Modernization", in Robert F. Spencer (ed.), *Religion and Change in Contemporary Asia*, Minnesota/Bombay, 1971, pp. 94f. 'Superstition' is paraphrased as 'misdirected popular belief' and translated into Marathi as *dharma-bholepaṇā* in *The Little Modern Dictionary* (English-

---

English-Marathi) by K. Bh. Virkar, *bholā* has traditionally a rather positive religious connotation, i. e. 'simple', 'undesigning', and 'unsuspecting'. Molesworth, *Marathi-English Dictionary*, s.v.

[5] Sitakant Mahapatra; "The Tribal World and the Small Community", in *New Quest*, 15 (May-June 1979), pp. 133ff, at p. 139.

What is meant is not 'communalism' or a caste-ridden society, but the preservation of culture in little communities, the 'little traditions' within the regional traditions or the so-called 'Great Tradition' of India. The 'Little Tradition' gives the individual his sense of identity and prevents him from merging into the anonymity of the conformism and superficiality of modern time. I should like to elaborate a little on the important role which the forest as the separate world of the tribals played in the past. I will also consider the relationship between the tribals, the forest, and the world outside the forest, which might be called for the sake of simplicity the world of Hinduism. It is sometimes overlooked how much more India was forested about 100 to 200 years ago before the great extension of agriculture began. This must have had a considerable and constant influence on the religious attitudes of those living beyond the forest or trying to penetrate it. As a matter of fact, from ancient times a cultural and spatial separatedness between different communities was recognized in India. This is well expressed by the theory of the five landscapes in the Ancient Classical Tamil Literature, the Cankam Literature of ca. 2nd to the 4th century A.D. Though this theory is very familiar to scholars working on Tamil Nadu it is not generally known to outsiders. We must, therefore, give a short summary of this theory. These landscapes, called *tiṇai*, were the guiding principles of a theory of poetry which consisted of two components, *puram* and *akam*. *Akam* was considered with domestic life, with the inner life and with eroticism, the most personal aspect of a human being. *Puram*, on the other hand, represented the sum of outer life, the active life in public, and last but not least warlike occupations. Certain aggressive actions of a tribal chieftain were themes of *puram* and were ascribed to definite physiographical or ecological regions. *Akam,* in short, means love poetry and *puram* war poetry. Certain human situations like separation of the lovers, the waiting of a woman for her lover, their meeting, etc., were themes of the *akam* poetry. The term *tiṇai* does not only mean a region characterised by ecological factors, but it also meant an erotic situation. The anxious waiting of the woman for her lover was expressed through the description of the pastoral landscape in the winter season through which she had to pass. The observation of landscapes, seasons, fauna and flora, of the inhabitants of a region and their religious, economical and cultural life was considered an indispensable precondition for the bard composing poetry. The description of the five landscapes became a poetical convention, but basically there was an acute observation which reflects the life and conditions in the five landscapes. It may be that these descriptions developed into poetical conventions and "petrifications of customs developed in objective reality,"[6] but, I suggest, that even in very recent times each of these five regions along with their implications survived. Each of the regions represented a relatively independent ecological area with its own particular type of people, economy, religion and culture. Each region nevertheless existed in symbiosis or had contacts with the other four regions.[7]

---

[6] P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *History of the Tamils from the Earliest Times to* 600 *A.D.*, Madras, 1960, p. 60.

[7] It often happened in the Deccan that a group of intruders in an area took up the occupations and the religious beliefs of their predecessors adjusting themselves to the social, religious and eco-

I would also think that the concept of the five landscapes even applied *mutatis mutandis* not only to Tamilnadu, but also to other regions in India, especially to the Deccan. I am sure that the application of this concept particularly to the study of the history of cults, pilgrimage centres and the development of religion in South India in general can be very fruitful. A very brief outline describing these five landscapes is, therefore, necessary.[8]

The first landscape is the mountainous landscape called *kuriñci* after a certain flower growing there. Peacocks, parrots, monkeys, elephants, horses and bulls live in it. You find the jackfruit, bamboo, and the *veṅkai* tree. The impenetrable forests are the home of the mountain tribes called Kānavar and Kuruvar. People live on the produce of the forest, e.g. tubers, wild honey etc. Bamboo provides 'rice'. Ivory is exchanged for salt from the coast. Some fields are cultivated with millet (*cāmai*). The god of the *kuriñci* is *Ceyōn.*

---

nomic conditions of their new environment. See D. D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality, Bombay,* 1961, p. 110 Sontheimer, Günther-Dietz, *Birobā, Mhaskobā und Khaṇḍobā. Ursprung, Geschichte und Umwelt von pastoralen Gottheiten in Mahārāṣṭra.* Wiesbaden, 1976, p. 103ff.

8. The outline is based on Sontheimer, op. cit., pp. 16ff. For further details one may refer to Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan. On Tamil Literature of South India,* Leiden, 1973, pp. 85ff. *Idem,* "The Beginnings of Bhakti in South India", in *Temenos* vol. 13 (1977), pp. 223-257. George, L. Hart III, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil. Their Milieu and Their Sanskrit Counterparts,* Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1975, pp. 211ff.

The second landscape is the pastoral region, called *mullai* after a kind of jasmin-creeper. There are cows, bulls, sheep, and goats. The preponderant crop is millet and the fields subsidiary to pastoral life are cultivated by bullock-drawn ploughs. We find different pastoral communities which keep either cows, or buffaloes, or sheep. The god of the *mullai* is Māyōn, 'The Dark One'. Ceyōn is derived from *cey,* which means either 'red' or 'young'. Ceyōn who is eventually called Murukan is the 'Lord of the Mountain' —*malaikiḷavōn.* He lives on the hill, but was also worshipped as the *kaṭampa* tree. Very much like the Vedic Rudra, as described in the *Śatarudrīya,*[9] he is ubiquitous and lives in forests, groves, bays, rivers, ponds, crossroads and also in the assembly hall. He carries a spear similar to the spear of the tribal chieftains in the *kuriñci.* His priests who are also soothsayers are called *velan* (carriers of the spear). The *velan* perform an ecstatic dance. In these priests, we discern the tribal priest, the 'shaman' and exorcist who can be seen as the complementary counterpart of the Brahman. Ceyon/Murukan receives offerings of millet, flowers and meat of rams. Ceyōn/Murukan is not only the famous god of Tamilnadu, but he is also what we might call a manifestation of a proto-Indian god of whom Rudra/Śiva and many other gods, especially in the Deccan are varying, but basically the same manifestations. Murukan was eventually associated with Śiva as his son Skanda/Kārttikeya. Whereas the hill tribes, the Kānavars, dedicate their dance to Murukan and his beloved Vaḷḷi who comes from the Kuruvar tribe, the Ācciyar, the pastoral tribe, dance the *kuravai* in honour of Māyōn who is identified with Kṛṣṇa. But, one must emphasize here that Vaiṣṇavization happened at a much later stage. There was much symbiosis between the *mullai* and the *kuriñci,* on which I cannot elaborate here. Māyōn may have even developed from the corresponding god of the *kuriñci* region, Ceyon. However that may be, two gods of the tribes grown from the beliefs of the tribes were eventually identified with Skanda/Kārttikeya and Kṛṣṇa. What should be stressed here is that regional folk cults and the beliefs of lower castes and the tribes reflect other, if not primordial aspects of gods like Murukan, Subramanyam, Skanda, Kārttikeya, Māyōn/Kṛṣṇa/Vāsudeva, and Tirumāl/Neṭiyōn. The identification of these gods with the purāṇic Śiva and Viṣṇu is often rather a tertiary than a secondary development.

---

[9] *Śatarudrīya, Taittirīya-saṃhitā,* 4.5.

The third landscape was the riverine area, the settled 'nuclear agricultural area' (Burton Stein) called *marutam*. It is the riceland inhabited by settled farmers and it is the backbone of the kingdom. It is ruled over by a king (Ventan, according to *Tolkāppiyam* III.5=Indra) and the subjects do not know the bow of the forester, but only the rainbow and no other weapon than the ploughshare. We may note here that all land was basically divided between *menpulam*—'paddy land', 'soft and tender land' and *vanpulam*—'hard and barren land', 'millet land'.[10] According to the *Tamil Index* of the Pre-Pallava period *vanpulam* consists of 'jungle tracts' and 'pasture lands'.[11]

---

[10] See George, L. Hart III, op. cit., p. 19. Such distinctions are ubiquitious in the Deccan. Cp. the Marathi term *jirāyat* for land that may be used for rainfed crop in distinction from *bāgāyat* for gardenland.

[11] N. Subrahmanian, *Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index*, Madras, 1966, s.v.

I may pass over the fourth landscape, that is the maritime landscape, *neytal,* and come to the fifth area, the *pālai.* It comes into origin only in the hot season, namely when parts of the pastoral and mountainous regions dry up. Lakes and water reservoirs are empty and animals suffer. What *pālai* implies one may experience in the hot months from Caitra (March/April) onwards: The trees in forest areas like Bastar are leafless and the red blossoms of the 'Flame of the Forest' (*Butea Monosperma*) and actual forest-fires abound. The *pālai* becomes infested with marauding tribes, especially that of the Maravars whose descendants still exist and who used to raid caravans of merchants. We shall return to them later. The goddess of the *pālai* region is Korravai. Even cows are sacrificed to her and she is the goddess of warrying tribes. She also is a huntress and rides a stag. Murukan, 'The Young One', eventually becomes her 'son'. There are many comparable manifestations of this goddess in South India, the Deccan and elsewhere. The goddess lives on in many cults, e.g., in the cult of Aṅkalaman in Tamilnadu and Andhra. She seems to come from the *kāṭu* which may mean 'forest' as well as '*śmaśāna*', and she is often connected with the *śmaśāna.* Aṅkalamman seems to be derived from *kaṅkal*—an emaciated, dried-out skeleton. Heat, *śmaśāna,* and forest connect her with the ancient goddess of the *pālai,* the forest and pastoral area turned into a desert in the hot season.

Following the distinction in the Old Tamil Literature I would like to distinguish here between the tribals of the forest and the pastoral tribes. Thus the tribals of the forest are, for instance, the Murias and Māḍiyas of Bastar and the Cencūs of the Eastern Ghats. But, we must also think of the great pastoral tribes, like the Rabāris in Rajasthan, the Gollas in Andhra Pradesh, the Kurubas in Karnatak, and the large Dhangar communities in Maharashtra. All these groups even now have more or less their own ecological niches.

Leaving Old Tamil Literature we may look in the Sanscritic culture for terms and a concept which are used to express a basic religious, economic and spatial separatedness. It is best expressed in the terms *kṣetra* and *vana* or *araṇya*. The terms *vana* and *araṇya* seem to be used more or less as equivalents in late Vedic and in the post-Vedic literature.[12] By *kṣetra* I mean inhabited, well-settled space with regular plough agriculture,[13] the village in such space, e. g., the *agrahāra* villages in coastal Karnāṭaka or *śāsana* villages in Orissa, and the holy centres connected with them. We are neglecting in this context the question of "urban" trade centres in ancient and medieval India. By *vana* I mean 'wild space', 'forest' or jungle which harbours the 'hermitage', the tribals, the *saṃnyāsī* and the *āśrama.*[14] We have avoided to use the terms *grāma* or *pura* instead of *kṣetra,* though *grāma* or *pura* may well be found in the settled nuclear agricultural area, the heartland of powerful kingdoms. Thus in Maharashtra villages ending with *–gaon, –gāv* (Skt. *grāma*) or *–puri* are mostly found in the Godavari basin and the Vidarbha area which were the bases for the kingdoms of the Sātavāhanas, Vākāṭakas, and the Yādavas of Devagirī.[15] Apart from its early connotation of a 'mobile village' or 'migrating cattle-keepers', a 'host of people' or a 'flock of cattle' etc.,[16] *grāma* does not necessarily imply a village inhabited by Brahmins and dominated by their ideology of *varṇa, dharma,* and purity, nor does it connote a 'holy centre'.

---

[12] J. F. Sprockhoff, "Āraṇyaka und Vānaprastha in der vedischen Literatur", in *WZKS,* XXV (1981), pp. 19ff., pp. 43, 84.

[13] Sometimes there may be plough cultivation instead of shifting cultivation in the *'vana'*. Thus the Gonds of Andhra Pradesh raise millet crops by plough cultivation with bullocks, but their magical harvest rituals and their legends do not refer to the plough. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh,* New Delhi, 1979, p. 444ff.

[14] See Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus,* London, 1970, p. 195 and fn. 96c.

This dichotomy of *vana* and *kṣetra* is not mutually exclusive, but it is rather complementary or a continuum similarly as the continuum from tribe to caste. Related to this is the opposition between tribal religion and what has been called 'codified Hinduism' (A. Eschmann) or 'normative Hinduism'.[17] Based on these concepts Hinduism has recently been defined as 'a process, as a *dynamic continuum* operating in both ways between the two theoretical constructs of tribal religion and normative codified Hinduism'.[18] Without losing sight of the concepts and constructs we emphasize here, however, the spatial separatedness and continuity expressed by the *tiṇais* in Tamil literature and by the terms *vana* and *kṣetra* and their religion, spiritual, economic, and social implications. This dichotomy of nature and culture in Indian terms is now steadily replaced by an urban-rural dichotomy, city *versus* village.

---

[15] See Iravati Karve, *Maharashtra–Land and Its People, Maharashtra State Gazetteer,* Bombay, 1968, pp. 64ff., 67.

[16] See W. Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien nach den Brāhmaṇa-Texten dargestellt,* Wiesbaden, 1957, p. 51ff.

[17] See the discussion in A. Eschmann, "Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa...", p. 79ff. S. Gupta, "Modes of Worship and Meditation", in *Hindu Tantrism,* Leiden, *Köln,* 1979, p. 127ff., on normative (*smārta*) Hindu rituals, cit. by K. V. Zvelebil, *The Irula (Erla) Language,* pt. III, *Irula Lore, Texts and Translations,* Wiesbaden, 1982, p. 131.

[18] Zvelebil, *ibidem.*

In the past the *vana* was the realm of the tribals and at the roots of much of Hinduism is the worship of the spirits of mountains, trees, animals, the *yakṣas,* snakes and their home, termite mounds, but also deified clan ancestors. The more the *kṣetra* spread into the *vana,* the more the tribal cults were integrated by an exceedingly slow, but steady process over centuries. As indicated, the assimilation of the tribal cults into the *kṣetra* meant only a transformation, but no abolition. They were reinterpreted in terms of the cults and rituals of the *kṣetra.* The unbound elements of nature became regulated through myths and different rituals which were handled by ritual experts. Such rituals found detailed elaboration in the Vedic rituals or, e. g. in the *Pañcarātras.*[19] The *vana* had its ambivalence and ambiguous values as seen from the *kṣetra*: it may be considered deadly, chaotic, primordial, full of *bhūtas, daityas,* and *rakṣasas,* but it also had very much its positive values. It was the source of creation and renewal of life. The burning place, the *śmaśāna,* is sometimes compared with the forest. In Tamil *kāṭu* means forest as well as *śmaśāna.* Similarly as from the ash of the clash—and burn shifting cultivation, once widely practised by tribes, new life and a crop is born, ash does not only stand for death in Hinduism, but is also a symbol of fertility.

---

[19] For the ritualization of nature in Tamil temples see, e. g., David Dean Shulman, *Tamil Temple Myths. Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in South Indian Śaiva Tradition,* Princeton, 1980, p. 26f. For the elimination of Death as rival in the classical *śrauta yajña,* see J. C. Heesterman, "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer", in *WZKSO,* VIII (1964), pp. 1–31.

Brahmanical themes of creation and the forest of the tribals as a source of creation and new life are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There is actually a close identity between the forest and the unmanifest *brahman* and the god Brahmā. Characteristically fish, tortoise, and boar—*par excellence* animals of the forest and the tribals—are also originally forms of Prajāpati or Brahmā before they become linked with Viṣṇu and incorporated into the *daśāvatāras.* The *daśāvatāras* themselves imply the gradual movement from the *vana* to the *kṣetra.* The reasons and functions of Paraśurāma, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are more intelligible in the context of the requirements of the *kṣetra,* e. g. saving the Brahmins from the flood of the Kṣatriyas (Paraśurāma), upholding *dharma* (Rāma), protecting or tending cattle and ploughing (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma). Similarly as on a microcosmic level the *vana* is a source of renewal of life and e.g. villagers periodically desert the village and migrate into the forest (see below), the cycle of the *yugas* comes to an end and people will take refuge to a life in the forest (*Viṣṇu-purāṇa* 4.24.25—29).

Already in the Vedic texts and in later Sanskrit literature we find the notion which associates *brahman* or *Brahmā* with the world tree and the origin of heaven and earth.[20] Brahmā is often associated with trees and forests which also represent unmanifest origin and creation. The connection between forest, Brahmā and the tribals is evident in the origin of the famous cult of Brahmā in Pushkar, Rajasthan. It is told in the *Padma-Purāṇa* (*Ādi.* II.82) that Brahmā was attracted there by a forest near the present Pushkar.

---

[20] See J. Deppert, *Rudras Geburt. Systematische Untersuchungen zum Inzest in der Mythologie der Brāhmaṇas,* Wiesbaden, 1977, p. 88. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* II.8.9.6 (ASS, Poona, 1898). According to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* IX.110 Brahmā lived in the forest and was born as a tree. See also K. R. van Kooij, *Worship of the Goddess. According to the Kālikāpurāṇa,* Leiden, 1972, p. 9 as regards Kāmarūpa and the cave of Mt. Nīla, the residence of the goddess Kāmākhyā. See Ch. 64.43-46 of the *Kālikāp.* where Mt. Nīla is held to be the central piece of the first stone made by Brahmā in order to be a support for Viṣṇu in his fights with the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. In the Deccan the origin of a cult is often associated with a tree or a termite mound. In Tirupati it was a termite mound raised beside a tamarind tree planted by Brahmā in which Viṣṇu resided and which was the origin of the cult. The termite mound is identified with Ādiśeṣa, also with a local *devī,* Cf. *The Glories and Mysteries of Lord Venkateswara.* Engl. transl. of Sri N. Subrahmanyam, *Sri Venkateswara Leela Mahathmyamu,* Tirumalai Hills P.O., 1962, p. 25ff. The tamarind tree or the tamarind forest (Tamil *tiṇḍivanam,* Marathi *diṇḍīravan,* Skt. *tintiṇī, tintriṇīvanam* etc., and *ciñcā*=tamarind tree) at the origin links Citambaram, Tirupati, and Pandharpur. See the important article by Rāmacandra Ciṃtāmaṇ Ḍhere, "*Diṃḍīravanāce rahasya*", in *Navabhārat,* June 1982, pp. 1–10. The origin of the famous Mallikārjuna on Śrīśailam is also said to be a *lingam* hidden in a termite mound.

He entered the forest and all trees were pleased about his arrival. They requested him to stay there for ever. He agreed to stay. Three lotus petals fell from his hand which became three sacred lakes. Pushkar is even today a pilgrimage and trade centre for many pastoral tribes, and their influence at the origin of the cult is still preserved in the *Padma Purāṇa*. When Brahmā wanted to perform a *yajña* on the full-moon day of the month of Kārttik (Oct./Nov.)) his wife Sāvitrī was absent, and as he could not perform the sacrifice without his wife, he married a girl of the pastoral Gujara tribe—according to local traditions—or a cowherdess (*gopabālikā*).[21] Her name was Gāyatrī.

The true and ideal Brahmin as the human manifestation of *brahman* and Brahmā represent the uncontaminated primordial purity. Purity is thought indispensable in rituals, whether Vedic or non-Vedic. The purity of the Brahmin can also be compared with the purity and innocence of a child. Thus human sacrifice often required an unmarried child as a victim. The sacrifice of children at the foundation of forts etc. was a not so frequent, yet well-known example.

In the *Caritra* of the God Mhaskobā of Maharashtra we come across another example. The five *brahmacārī* grandsons of the founder of the cult, were sacrificed on the god's demand to prove the sincerity (*sattva*) of his devotees.[22] When the heads were cut off, they miraculously turned into heads of sheep and the children remained unscathed. This reminds us of the replacement of the human victim by a he-goat in the Vedic *śrauta* ritual.[23] In classical mythology the head of the archetype-Brahmin Dakṣa is replaced by a head of a he-goat or, especially in the legends of Karnataka and further South, by the head of a ram.[24] One of the reasons why Dakṣa was beheaded by the furious Śiva or Bhairava was the non-invitation of Śiva for the *yajña* or rather Dakṣa's blindness as to the true nature of Śiva. The beheading and replacing of the head by a ram's head amounts to a relapse of the Brahmin Dakṣa into the primordial state of a *paśu*, here a ram belonging to the pastoral world. A similar case of relapse in folk religion is that of a certain Brahmin who protected his fields by *mantras* which killed any intruder.[25] In this way a shepherd boy who stole some fruits was killed by the evil Brahmin. The boy fell down from a tree and was killed. Ever since the dead boy became an object of worship. The evil Brahmin, however, was metamorphosed into his primordial state of a Pipaḷ tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and is still worshipped as such in front of temple of the boy god.[26]

---

[21] *Census of India,* Vol. XIV, *Rajasthan,* Part VII-B, Fairs & Festivals, 1966, p. 78.

[22] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 205f.

---

[23] J. C. Heesterman, "The Case of the Severed Head", in *WZKSO*, XI (1967), pp. 22-43, at p. 32, fn. 41, citing the *Vādhūlasūtra* (extracts ed. and tr. W. Caland in *Acta Orientalia*, VI (1928), pp. 229-33) fragm. 110: 'Previously they used to immolate a man for Prajāpati', but when the gods retired from the sacrifice the human victim was replaced by a he-goat.

[24] Dakṣa is depicted in Karnataka in innumerable votive plaques with the head of a ram. He and Satī/Mahākālī stand on the sides of Vīrabhadra.

[25] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 187f.

In the *śrāddha* rites for the deceased ancestors Brahmins officiate. In the *nukto* ancestral rite amongst the Bhils, however, the *vaha* acts as a Brahmin or priest. The *vaha* is a male child from the clan of the dead person who gets possessed by the ancestral spirit. For this purpose he is invested like a Brahmin with a sacred thread. In other words, because of its innocence the child's status is equivalent to that of a Brahmin.[27] The innocence of a child-god is also connected with the primeval forest and often the child-god is found in a forest or thicket, or in the *śmaśāna* which is homologous to the forest. The most famous case is, of course, Skanda/Kārttikeya who was 'born in a thicket of reeds' (*śara-bhū*) on the bank of the river Gaṅgā. Birobā the tutelary god of the shepherds (Dhangars) of Maharashtra was born in the forest and found on a tree by two huntresses, who became his forest mothers.[28] His mother Suravantī was found in a golden casket in a termite mound.[29] The child Birobā or Vīrabhadra is also said to have been found on a *śmaśāna* according to a Kannaḍa account.[30] The god Dhuḷobā, another Dhangar god, is said to have been found as a child in the ash of the Holī fire.[31] The story of Maturaivīran is very similar to that of Birobā. He was exposed as a child in the forest by a king and was found by an untouchable Cakkili women who raised him with her husband.[32] The famous god Aiyanār similarly made his first appearance in the forest : the little child was found there by a hunting king.[33]

---

[26] The Gonds believe that Brahma Dev resides in a fig-tree. For them it is a very uncommon spirit : 'Sometimes he leaps on a man passing beneath his tree, and then for the period of his possession that man goes crazy in his wits.' Shamrao Hivale and Verrier Elwin, *Songs of the Forest,* London, 1935, p. 36. Cit. in Shyam Parmar, *Folklore of Madhya Pradesh,* New Delhi, 1972, p. 25. In Maharashtra a young Brāhmaṇa who dies before the ungirding of the *munja* thread and the investiture of the sacred thread becomes a spirit in the Munjyā tree (a name of the Pipal tree) and is called Munjābā. The trunk of the tree may be enwrapped with white threads by women and worshipped for a son.

[27] See Stella Kramrisch, "Indian Varieties of Art Ritual", in J. Kitagawa and Ch. L. Long (eds.), *Myths and Symbols. Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade.* The Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969, pp. 23ff, 26-28.

---

[28] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 187. See also *idem*, "Some Notes on Birobā, the Dhangar God of Maharashtra", in *Prof. D. D. Kosambi Commemoration Volume. Science and Human Progress*, Bombay, pp. 169ff., pp. 170ff. The full myth of Birobā is told in *Indische Märchen* to appear in the Diederichs Verlag, Köln.

[29] Sontheimer, "Some Notes on Birobā...", p. 171.

[30] Sontheimer, *ibidem*, p. 173f. Yallangavḍa Ph. Āṭṭikolla, *Hālumatada Caritra*, Dhārvāḍ, 1949, pp. 53-55.

[31] See Sontheimer, G. D., "King Vikram and Kamalū Śinde, The Shepherd. Bhakti Episodes From an Oral Epic of the Dhangars of Maharashtra", in *South Asian Digest of Regional Writing*, Vol. 6 (1977), pp. 97ff., p. 121, p. 123.

[32] See David Shulman, "On South Indian Bandits and Kings", in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (offprint), pp. 284ff, p. 294ff.

[33] Stella Kramrisch, op. cit., p. 32f.

A very good example of the forest and the trees as a source of renewal is Lord Jagannātha whose *mūrti* and those of Balabhadra and Subhadrā are again and again renewed (in the Navakalevara ritual) after a certain period of years by finding a tree from which the holy wood (*dāru*) is obtained for the new *mūrtis*. Meanwhile the old deities are believed to be 'sick'. The rites after finding a suitable tree, the so-called 'forest sacrifice' (*vanayāga*), are designed to ward off the evil, which is associated with the forest, and to sanctify the tree. One important incident of the rituals is the conveying of the life-substance, *brahmapadārtha,* from the old *mūrtis* to the new ones.[34]

The tree which stands for the abounding, exuberant, fertile and divine force of nature is fashioned into the semi-anthropomorphic *mūrti* of Jagannātha which still reminds us of its origin from the *vana*. The divine is now renewed, refined, and confined by rituals in the *mūrti* and the precincts of the temple. And though the *daitas* (*daityas*). as the tribals are called in Orissa, play an important role in the rituals, the divine is now primarily served by the expert *pūjā* of the *pujārīs*.

The 'higher', sophisticated 'Sanscritic' ritual often has an irresistible appeal for those tribals who are in close contact with the world of the *kṣetra*. I recall an incident from Maharashtra. There is a famous temple of Mahādeva at

---

[34] Tripathi, G. C., "Navakalevara : The Unique Ceremony of 'Birth' and 'death' of the 'Lord of the World' ", in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannath*..., pp. 223ff. and A. Eschmann, ibid., "Prototypes of the Navakalevara Ritual and their Relations to the Jagannatha Cult", pp. 265ff.

Shingnapur in the Satara district. At the root of the cult were Koḷīs who were traditional tribesmen given to hunting and fishing and predatory activities, but were then reduced to ferrymen and water-carries in the villages. When I asked one Koḷī why the *pūjā* went into the hands of the Brahmins, he answered without resentment : "They asked from us the *pūjā* of the god. We gave them the *pūjā*. They gave us the clothring and said : 'you are Koḷīs, take the clothring (Mar. *cumbaḷ*) and bring water to the temple'."

For the tribal, the tribal priest, especially the 'shaman', the *mūrti* is less important. He is still much in closer contact with nature than with culture, *e. g.* with animals of the forest which are identical with deities, or from which gods and ascetics derive their strength.[35] The 'shaman' may be possessed by a god, in fact, himself become the god, and he may also manipulate the forces of nature which from the point of view of the settled people of the *kṣetra* accounts for his reputation as a sorcerer and magician.[36]

On the social level the *kṣetra* is marked by a more rigid, stratified social system. Life, seemingly unbound and free in the forest, prior to the impact of the *kṣetra* is brought under the social fold of the latter. Ideally, the king rules justly with the help of Brahmins and the Dharmaśāstra. Life in the *kṣetra,* in the 'nuclear areas of agriculture' (Burton Stein), in the *marutam* of the classical Tamil literature, was always more strict and hierarchical than in the pastoral area, the *vraja,* or the forest, *vana.* From the point of view of the settled people, who often use clichés and have their preconceived views about the tribal people, the normal rules of social behaviour did not apply in the *vana.* The rules were *anācāra* (or *niśācāra*) rather than *ācāra.* In the notion of the settled people, there was a relative freedom in the *vana,* often associated in poetry and religion with eroticism. Devī cults and tantricism developed in such a context, though we should not identify tribal fertility rites and games with the contents and aims of tantricism.[37]

---

[35] See Alfred Hiltebeitel, "The Indus Valley 'Proto-Śiva', Reexamined through Reflections on the Goddess, the Buffalo, and the Symbolism of *vāhanas*", in *Anthropos*, Vol. 73 (1978), pp. 767ff.. p. 775, 784ff.

[36] W. Ruben, *Eisenschmiede und Dämonen in Indien*, Leiden, 1939.—The same author's *Waldabenteuer des indischen epischen Helden*, Berlin, 1962 contains further interesting material on the topic of *vana*.

Fertility rites associated with the tribes also play an important role on the 10th day of the Durgotsava and the festival is accordingly called *śabarotsva.* The Śabaras were supposed to be a mountain tribe in the Deccan, but by extension the name was applied to any tribe. The ritual involved *inter alia* sexuality, music, dance, auspicious dance and rivalry, and obscene ritual language. All social barriers were to be abandoned on that day.[38] There was also the common dance of the tribal boys and girls in the forest like the famous marriage dance of the Māḍiyas of Bastar. In the pastoral area (*vraja*=Braj) we have the *rāsa* dance of the *gopīs* with the *gopas* and with Kṛṣṇa. The dance of the pastoral people and the love-play between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* was gradually absorbed by the settled society in a sublimated way, often turned into philosophy. Many of the Bhakti cults like the Kṛṣṇa cult itself sprang up in a pastoral surrounding and atmosphere. Behind this was also the instinctive feeling that the tribals had more readily direct access to the divine, because living in the forest they had retained their innocence, whereas the life and the rituals of the *kṣetra* may apparently turn empty, insipid, and sick. direct access to the divine, because they had retained their innocence, whereas the rituals of the *kṣetra* may apparently turn empty and insipid.

---

[37] Cp. R. S. Sharma, "Material Milieu of Tantricism", in R. S. Sharma (ed.), in collaboration with Vivekanand Jha, *Indian Society: Historical Probings. In Memory of D. D. Kosambi,* New *Delhi,* 1974, pp. 175-189. There are many erotic, 'tantric' sculptures in and around the temples of Barsur in Bastar (now collected in one temple used as a godown and protected by the Arch. Survey of India). Bastar was ruled by an old Nāga dynasty in the 12th cent. and, e. g. by the Kākatiyās (18th cent.). Barsur was again taken over by jungle. The sculptures hardly reflect tribal customs as such, but rather tantric practices and beliefs. Tantric practices may have grown around the cult of the goddess Danteśvarī at Dantevada, about 20 miles from Barsur, where human sacrifices were formerly offered (*E. I.* IX, p. 160f.).

In the classical Sanskrit texts we find the forest often considered as impure and dangerous, or shall we say, unrefined and the tribals as cruel and ignorant. But at the same time they are also viewed as innocent and their ignorance gives them more direct access to the divine than the strenuous ritual efforts in the *kṣetra*. There is the famous story of Śabarī, a woman of the tribe of forest-dwellers, who offered berries to Rāma which she had already tasted. Rāma unhesitatingly accepted what was actually from the point of view of the *kṣetra* impure.[39] And there is the other famous story of the king of the Niṣādas—Sundarasenaka—who inadvertently worshipped Śiva by his acts. Śiva abducted the hunter from the army of Yama taking both, the hunter and his dog, to Śivaloka.[40] Let me cite an instance from Maharashtra told by a shepherd belonging to the great pastoral Dhangar community of Maharashtra. Traditionally their beliefs and rituals centre around their ancestors and a clan god like Birobā who may have been a deified ancestor. How did the gods come to the Dhangars? How did a god manifest himself among them? These were my questions. And a shepherd told me the following story:

---

[38] See Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. V, 1, p. 176f. *Kālikāpurāṇa* 62.31–32 63.17–18; 19–22. Kooij, R. R. Van, *Worship of the Goddess According to Kālikāpurāṇa*, Leiden, 1972, pp. 109, 121.

"A Brahmin went daily to the river to perform his *sandhyā*. He first took a bath, performed his *sandhyā* and this he did every day. It was in the *satyayuga*. There was also a simple, honest *bhoḷā* Dhangar. He saw the Brahmin who held his nose, dived into the water, came up, dived again and so on. When the Dhangar saw this, he decided to ask the Brahmin: 'Uncle, *why* do you *do* so?'—'Well, my boy, I worship the god and when I worship him, the god appears.'—'Is that true?'—'Definitely', the Brahmin said and went away. The Dhangar was simple-minded,

---

[39] *Rāmāyaṇa, Araṇyakāṇḍa,* 73. Vettam Mani, *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia,* p. 634b, p. 659b.

[40] See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra,* Vol. V, Pt. 1, Poona, p. 225f. *Garuḍa Purāṇa* 1.124.

bhoḷā. He said to himself: 'Worshipping thus means holding nose and mouth closed and diving into the water. The result is: That was in his opinion the meaning of the words of the Brahmin. He jumped into the water closing his mouth and holding his nose. He sank down and down and was about to get drowned. The god was in a difficulty. 'That Dhangar will kill himself, if I don't show myself.' And while the Dhangar was about to die the god appeared: a real *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, with four arms. 'Leave your nose, you mad fellow. I am the god!' he said. The Dhangar emerged. 'Are you the god?' he asked, 'I am not sure. How can I be sure,'—'Now, that I have shown myself to you, you are not sure?'—'No', he said, 'unless the Brahmin comes and says, "That is, indeed, the god". I shall not leave my nose. And thus I shall die. And the blame will be on the god. But I shall go to the Brahmin and fetch him.' The god said: 'I have come to show myself to you and not to the Brahmin.'—'Well and good, I shall be drowned', answered the Dhangar. 'That is not nice of you', said the god, 'you will die. Better go and fetch the Brahmin'.—'You are sending me away to fetch the Brahmin', said the Dhangar, 'and when I return, you are away and off'. It was a simple-minded kind of bhakti. He tied the god to a tree with his turban and ran to fetch the Brahmin. 'Uncle', he said, 'the god has come and whether he is the god or somebody else, you will have to make out for me'. The Brahmin said: 'Twelve years have passed, I have closed my mouth and nose and dived into the water and never saw the god anywhere. You have not even touched the water and you mean to say the god has shown himself to you?'—'Yes, indeed', said he. 'I have tied him to a tree.'—'Just don't talk nonsense'.—'No, it is true.' He went along with the Brahmin and there it was: the four-armed *mūrti* of Viṣṇu Mahārāja. The Brahmin touched his feet in devetion. 'It is the bhakti of the Dhangar which allowed me to see god.' The god said to the Dhangar: –'Because of your bhakti I have shown myself to the Brahmin and you. Whatever you wish, I shall grant to you.' But the Dhangar was simple, *bhoḷā*. He said: 'What can you possibly give which I do not already have? I have plenty—four brothers, mother, father, wife, children, 100 sheep—what more could you possibly give to me? I wish that you must daily come to our sheep-pen and have some milk.' The god promised it..."

Many points of profound meaning are hidden in this seemingly simple story, which comes not from the manuscript of a learned Brahmin, but from the vast unwritten oral literature of the pastoral tribes. It is not the complicated, unintelligible ritual of the Brahmin, but the simple bhakti of a shepherd from the pastoral area, which makes the god appear.[41] Yet, the more sophisticated Brahmin is necessary to identify and interpret the god to the tribal. The simplicity and exigency of the Dhangar is shown in his lack of demands and desires for more and more material wealth. But that characteristic feature the tribal shares with the true and ideal Brahmin.

---

[41] Cp., e. g. Sontheimer, "King Vikram...", p. 113ff. The Mahākāla of Ujjain goes, thirsty for *bhakti*, in search of a true bhakta and literally 'goes out of his way' and finds him finally in a far-away shepherd settlement. The god shows himself first to playing *children*; see *ibidem*, p. 109. Sontheimer, *Birobā*,..., p. 207f. For Khaṇḍobā riding on his horse and joining cattle-herd boys on the mountain at Jejuri, see G. H. Khare, *Mahārāṣṭrācīṃ cār daivateṃ*, Puṇe, 1958, p. 90. As to the oral transmission as compared to the written word of a manuscript: Dhangars believe that the myth of Birobā should not be laid down in a *pothī* or manuscript because Birobā's power vanishes. His deeds have to be *sung* and are accompanied by music and dance. Sontheimer, *Birobā*,..., p. 198. But we should remember that in Brahmanical

The forest was also the place for the *āśrama* of the Ṛṣis and Sanskrit *kāvya* literature abounds in descriptions of the *vana* and *upavana*. Here we find a longing for beauty which was echoed in the German *Romantik* and its sympathy for the forest. The forest is also the abode of the ascetic, the renouncer of *saṃsāra,* of worldly life in the *kṣetra*. The dangers and deprivations of *vanavāsa,* of the life in the forest or on mountains and the direct access to the divine attracted the ascetic to perform *tapas*. The typical example is the ascetic sitting in or on a termite mound. This was not just self-torturous feat, but also the attempt to deflect something of the unbound forces of nature, to acquire supernatural powers, *siddhis,* or even enlightenment. The termite mound was an epitome of that unbound nature of the forest, a very old symbol of the primordial mound and of creation.[42] It is also in a termite

---

tradition the *correct recitation of the Vedas* is the true authoritative source of the Veda and not the manuscript as such. Moreover, song, dance, and the sound of musical instruments, especially the drum, are detrimental to the study of the Veda (cp. Mānu IV.113: *Vāṇa*=lute) and are eliminated in the classical *śrauta* ritual. See J. C. Heesterman, "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer", in *WZKSO,* Vol. VIII, 1964, p. 1ff., p. 12-14.

[42] John C. Irwin, "The Sacred Anthill and the Cult of the Primordial Mound", in *History of Religions,* 22, (1982), pp. 339-360.

mound where often a divinity first appeared to a tribal and was first worshipped by him to become eventually a famous cult.

In the wilderness the normal rules of *saṃsāra* were not applicable from the point of views of the settled people and it was thus the natural abode of the ascetic, the renouncer of *saṃsāra*. Even the saint who lived amidst society, normally had this, often recurring, phase in his spiritual development during which he had his *vanavāsa*, if only this meant *vanavāsa* metaphorically speaking.

A typical reaction of a Bhakta, saint and poet to the forest as a place of contemplation is that of the Maharashtrian Tukārāma :[43]

Trees, creepers, and the creatures of the forest
Are our kith and kin—
As are birds that sing.

These are the things
That give solitude its wholesome flavour
We are touched by neither good nor evil.

The sky is our canopy
The earth our throne
It is here that our mind enjoys itself alone.

A sack-cloth and a bowl take care of our needs
And the wind
Tells us the time.

---

[43] *Śrīsaṃta Tukārām Mahārāj yāṃcī Abhaṃgāṃcī Gāthā* 2138, [ed.] Mā. Kṛ. Deśmukh [and] Śaṃkar Vāman Dāṃḍekar, Puṇe, 1965 (repr.). The translation is by Dilip Chitre.

It is here that we feast
On the lore of Hari[44]
Course after delicious course.
Says Tukā, the mind
Can converse with itself:
The self is an argument
Unto itself.

In the forest unity and renewal of life is achieved in many respects on many levels. In Maharashtra the inhabitants of a village periodically move into the forest to have a communal dinner, the *vanabhojana* or the assembled village used to periodically desert the village and jointly worship the *bhūtas* and deities outside the village (*gāvsaī*).[45] The saint, like Tukārāma, may experience in the forest the unity of all life.

Often the renouncer of the *saṃsāra* may join others in an—alas futile—attempt to return to tribal primordiality, communal life and customs. This involves also the return to the simpler life of food gathering and begging.[46] Thus, e. g., the Mahānubhāva sect of Maharashtra which originated in the 13th century evolved rules in this respect:[47] one should give up one's country, relatives, and village

---

[44] Hari=the reliever.

[45] D. D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality,* Bombay, 1961, p. 195. Groups of villagers dressed in sackcloth can still be seen on a joint pilgrimage which takes them to Pandharpur. They call themselves *vanavāsīs.*

[46] Cp. Albrecht Wezler, *Die wahren 'Speiseresteesser' (Skt. vighasāśin)*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, 1978, p. 86ff and fn. 252.

[47] H. N. Nene (ed.), *Sūtrapāṭha,* Nagpur, 3rd edn., 1942.

(*Sūtrapāṭha, Ācāra* 1), at the border of one's country one should spend life under a tree (*Sūtrapāṭha, Ācāra* 26), one should be in a (tribal) hamlet (*hāḷi* or *pāḷi*), not in a town (*pura*) or city (*pāthaṇ. Sūtrapāṭha Ācāra Mālīkā* 2), one should sleep outside the village in a dilapidated shrine and so on.

It was in the forest, away from settled society, where the Buddhist monk, the Brahmin : *vānaprastha,* the *saṃnyāsin,* the Śaivite *Gosāvī,* the Liṅgāyat *virakta* could have those spiritual insights and revelations which caused them to formulate principles of universal applications. The *daṇḍakāraṇya* or *daṇḍakavana* is said to be the quintessence of the world and the seed of *dharma* and *mukti* in the *Brahmapurāṇa* (129.55 ; 161.73). It was in the realm of the renouncer living away from the society where consequently *sādhāraṇa dharmas* like *ahiṃsā, dama, dayā, satya, akrodha ārjavam* could be conceived and from where the *sādhāraṇa dharmas* emanated to make the rigidity of life and caste *dharma* in the settled society in the past tolerable and even worth living. *Ahiṃsā,* for example, was a *sādhāraṇa dharma* born in the forest among ascetics and saints. They were the protectors of animals living in harmony with them and they turned against 'ecocide'. The most famous example is that of Vālmīki, the erstwhile robber, who was significantly 'redeemed' and gained his inspiration to compose the *Rāmāyaṇa* by his *tapas* in a termite mound.[48] Later he cursed a Niṣāda hunter who killed a male curlew (*krauñca*) in front of the grief-stricken female partner.[49] Thus the

---

[48] Sontheimer, *Birobā...,* p. 169ff. *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa,* 6, 64ff, Gītāpres [*sic*], Gorakhpūr (n.d.).

[49] *Rāmāyaṇa,* I.2.1ff. Erich Hofstetter, *Der Herr der Tiere im alten Indien,* Wiesbaden, 1980, p. 98f.

Dharmaśāstras and the bhakti poetry of the saints amalgamated these ethical principles derived from the experience of ascetics and saints and their philosophical insights which were ultimately related to achieving *mokṣa,* or union with God.[50]

One of the great integrators of the *vana* and the *kṣetra* in mythology and ritual was, of course, Śiva with his manifold manifestations. These manifestations were ubiquitous, latent and ever-present, not descending from time to time when *dharma* was in danger, as in the case of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu was always more on the side of the settled people, looking after law and order and often treated as if he were an established, ideal king.[51] His ritual purity made him more acceptable to Brahmins. Kṛṣṇa, the outlandish Gopāla god, was only slowly absorbed by Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavism.

Narasiṃha, to whom Anncharlott Eschmann has traced much of what has gone into the Jagannātha cult, is an *avatāra* who has many features which connect him with the world of *vana,* and perhaps with a Śaivite type of divinity. In Maharashtra, at least, he seems to have been a *yakṣa* or a *bhūta* originally, belonging to a circle of 52 *bhūtas* or *vīras* with whom one would rather associate Śiva than Viṣṇu. Perhaps the very fact that he appears as half a man and half an animal may indicate his belonging to both worlds. In many places in Andhra he is *girija,* hill-born,[52] and, incidentally, he shares similar epithets connected with 'mountain' with Rudra, Śiva, and Murukan. There are beautiful oral legends in Andhra which associate Narasiṃha with the tribe of the Cencūs living in the eastern Ghātas, or, e. g. in Madduleti, near Betamcherla in the Kurnool district. It is told there that the king of the Cencūs had only one daughter, called Cencū Lakṣmī. She used to go hunting with bow and arrows in the forest. One day she saw a lion and shot him : from the dying lion the beautiful Narasiṃha arose. They fell in love with each other and Narasiṃha wanted to marry her. Cencū Lakṣmī wanted to see whether he was a suitable husband and put him to some tests, e. g. climbing trees, jumping over the river, collecting wild honey and finding a golden, life-bringing insect in a termite mound.[53]

---

[50] See G. D. Sontheimer, "die Ethik im Hinduismus", in Carl Heinz Ratschow (Hrsg.), *Ethik in den Weltreligionen,* Stuttgart etc., pp. 349ff., at p. 416f.

[51] On Viṣṇu treated as king see Friedhelm Hardy, "Ideology and Cultural Context of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Temple", in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review XIV* (1977), pp. 119–51, at p. 132-5. Cp. also Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition, Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual,* Delhi, 1977, pp. 26ff, at pp. 31, 70 who cites the legend of king Āma in which it is said '...without a part of Vishnu in him, none can become a king'. This sets the king into relation to the Brahman who asks him to give in charity, perform austerities, worship Brahmans and be steadfast in his devotion to Vishnu.

If we go to Ahobilam in the Kurnool district we find the same association of Narasiṃha with the tribals. The original cult is in the mountains where there is a rude primitive stone worshipped as Narasiṃha. The temple is built in the Vijayanagara style and has a rather touching sculptural scene : it shows a huge 'Cencū Lakṣmī as a huntress with a bow. She wears a leaf skirt. Before her crouches a miniature Narasiṃha who removes a thorn from the sole of her foot. Narasiṃha in this temple up in the hills (Eguva Ahobilam) is supposed to be *ugra*. In the much greater and elaborate temple complex in the plains below (Diguva Ahobilam) where he eventually appeared, he is *saumya*.

---

[52] See A. Eschmann, "The Vaiṣṇava Typology of Hinduization and the origin of Jagannātha", in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannāth...,* Ch. V, p. 99ff., at p. 108ff.

[53] The author wishes to thank Mr. B. S. Murlidhar Reddy and E. V. Rajendra Śarmā, Betamcherla, for their kind help while he was studying the Narasiṃha cult at Madduleti together with Dr. M. L. K. Murty, Deccan College, Pune.

The Vedic Rudra or Śiva with his polymorphic manifestations was originally beyond the brahmanical fold and the *kṣetra*. Nor was he originally, strictly speaking, a god of the forest tribals like the Goṇḍs. Perhaps the identification of the 'Highest Being' (Bhagavān, Pharsa Pen, Bārā Deo, Devaru Moi'tto) amongst the Goṇḍs with Śiva/Mahādeva (Śrī Śambhu Mahādeva) has been favoured by their common origin as mountain gods, often connected with the sun.[54] Rudra was thus, so to say, between the *vana* and

---

54. See Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh. Tradition and change in an Indian Tribe,* New Delhi etc., 1979, p. 182 : Shri Shambu Mahadeo [Śrī Śambhu Mahādev] who lives on the mountain Meru ; p. 180 : Originally three-hundred gods were born on the mountain Meru. See also Wolfgang K. Knabe, *Untersuchungen über die Grundlagen der Mària-Religion,* Düsseldorf, 1978, p. 82 : Geburtsorte der Clangottheiten sind Bergkuppen. Birobā, the Dhangar god of Maharashtra, similarly lives on the Kailās, and takes birth in the human world on the request of Śaṃkara who acts as a somewhat otiose God occasionally visiting the earth with Pārvatī. See Sontheimer, "Some Notes on Birobā...", p. 171f. For close parallels of the Dhangar

the *kṣetra* and was in contact with *all* communities from the highest to the lowest. It was he who could hold the two different ecological, cultural and religious areas together. Negatively this is expressed in his antagonism to the Brahmins culminating in the famous myth of the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice. On the other hand one of his manifestations is the *kṣetrapāla* and he is the protector of Brahmins. He lives on the border between *vana* and *kṣetra*.

It is common to identify, at least partially, the outlandish *rākṣasa, asura,* or *daitya* who infests the *vana,* with the god who is victorious over him. The *rākṣasa* etc. thus becomes a source of protection.[55] Rudra/Śiva is himself

---

myth to the Gond mythology, see v. Fürer-Haimendorf, op. cit., p. 180ff. The movement down from, often still spirit-like (*yakṣa*), hill gods to (anthropomorphical in conception, if not iconic) clan gods or village deities and, possibly a 'classical' deity of *kṣetra* is common. See the case of Narasiṃha, Murukan (originally the Ceyōn of the *kuriñci*) etc. and also Sontheimer, *Birobā, Mhaskobā, and Khaṇḍobā*..., p. 182 *et passim.* On the 'folk' and 'tribal' worship of the sun, see John C. Irwin, op. cit., p. 342f., p. 353, and Sontheimer, "Some Incidents in the History of the God Khaṇḍobā", in Marc Gaborieau et Alice Thorner [eds.], *Asie du Sud. Traditions et changements. VIth European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies,* Paris, 1978, pp. 111ff., at p. 112f. Śiva/Mahādeva, the hill-god, the worship of the sun and worship of the termite mound merge in the Khaṇḍobā/Mārtaṇḍa Bhairava cult. The worship of a termite mound as the origin of Mārtaṇḍa Bhairava or Maṇ-Mailār (=Ka. *maṇṇu* [*clay*]+*malla*+*ari*) in Ādimailār in Karnataka has been made clear by R. C. Dhere, Khaṃḍobā, Pune, 1961, p. 37ff.

55. Thus the demon defeated by Māruti/Hanumān depicted in his *mūrtis* may be painted red, 'because he may come up again',

of demoniac and outlandish origins as seen from the point of view of the people in the brahmanical *kṣetra*. According to the *Śatarudrīya,* he is Lord of all sorts of social groups with a dubious reputation.[56] But nevertheless he becomes a source of protection and a *kṣetrapāla*. The *rākṣasas* may be killed by him, but they may gain *mukti,* continue to live on in his name, like Mallāri (see below), become his gate-keepers,[57] support his throne,[58] or continue to exist in an independent, but somewhat inferior cult.[59] On the social level 'criminal tribes' like the Rāmośīs, Beḍars, Kaḷḷars may—apart from being special devotees of the god and having special privileges in festivals—be turned into watchmen of villages, fields and forts and be assigned police functions.[60]

The *rākṣasas* came from the realm of the *yakṣas* or *bhūtas*. The latter in turn were often identified with out-

---

as a Maharashtrian villager explained. Māruti himself, the Mahāvīra, and one of the 52 outlandish vīras/ghosts in Maharashtra becomes a devotee of Rāma.

[56] *Śatarudrīya* 4.5.1ff.

[57] See Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* 14.4; 15.9, and see below, the case of Malla. Also discussed in G. D. Sontheimer, "The Mallāri/Khaṇḍobā Myth as Reffected in Folk Art and Ritual", (in press), ms., p. 4ff.

[58] Sontheimer, "The Mallāri/Khaṇḍobā Myth...", ms. and plates.

[59] See, e. g. Sontheimer, *Birobā...,* p. 36, p. 84f.

[60] Sontheimer, *Birobā...,* p. 84f. (Kolīs), p. 86f. (Rāmośīs).

landish people like hunting tribes or pastoral groups.[61] In the Deccan the tribes are often linked with Mallāri. Mallāri, the enemy of Malla is an *avatāra* of Śiva who is called Khaṇḍobā in Maharashtra, Mallaṇṇa in Andhra, and Mailār in Karnataka. He is also called Mārtaṇḍa Bhairava. In an inscription of the year 1369 A.D. in Sanskrit and Telegu from Aiṅavolu near Warangal it is narrated that god Śiva, in order to protect Arjuna assumed the form of a hunter (Śabara), fought with the demon Malla and killed him, thus acquiring the name Mallāri.[62] Mallāri is worshipped by pastoral communities with a hunting background, by traditional fishing and hunting tribes like the Koḷīs, by ex-robbers like the Rāmośīs, and also by higher communities like Liṅgāyats, Marāṭhās and even Brahmins. But who is Malla? Already the Roman writer Plinius mentions the Malli tribe in whose territory the mount Mallus is located. In Tamil *Mallan* means a wrestler or an important personage. In Karnāṭaka, the *malla,* the chief wrestler in a village, is often from the Kuruba shepherd community. In the *Mārtaṇḍa Vijaya* Malla is depicted as a great king of the *daityas.*[63] 'Malla' is very often an epithet for historical royal personalities in South India who are described as great heroes (*vīras*) and may have been demonized for their following the custom of cattle-raids and kidnapping women.[64] But as Śiva/Khaṇḍobā is connatural with practically everybody the defeated Malla was turned into a bhakta and became one with Khaṇḍobā achieving *sayujyatā.*[65] Thus the outlandish demon was incorporated into the cult.

---

[61] Viewed from the settled people nomadic tribes may be called *bhūtas.* Westphal-Hellbusch, in L. S. Leshnik and G. D. Sontheimer (eds.) *Pastoralists and Nomads in South Asia,* p. 123.

[62] D. C. Sircar [ed.], in: *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for* 1957-58. Delhi, Govt. of India Press, 1967, pp. 8-9, 21.

[63] See, e. g. *Mārtaṇḍa Vijaya* 11.26 (ed. R. C. Dhere, Puṇe, 1974).

David Shulman has recently shown the ambivalent position of the South Indian predatory communities like the Kaḷḷars, Maravars, and Eyinārs who may in turn function as watchmen of fields, villages and towns.[66] They were given a 'recognized place, both geographically and socially.'[67] The home area of such groups, as we have seen, was the *mullai* or *kuriñci,* the pastoral area and the forested mountainous area which turned into *pālai* in the hot season. That the *tiṇai* concept can be applied to the religious, social, and economic conditions in other corresponding areas of the Deccan and specifically of Maharashtra has been already suggested. Shulman's material offers further possibilities for comparison. A very short summary of these correspondences with Maharashtra may not lead us astray. The South Indian robber communities correspond to those of the Rāmośīs and Koḷīs in Maharashtra. The Rāmośīs were called Beḍars/Beraḍs and traditionally inhabited an area which is pastoral and prone to famines. The area covers the famine tract with little rainfall eastward Pune and reaches right into Karnataka into the Rayalaseema.[68] The Koḷīs (Mahādev Koḷīs) and Malhār Koḷīs) are found in the same area, but also in the densely forested Western Ghātas. On the other hand both communities had a tendency to become agriculturists Kuṇbīs (Marāṭhās), a fact which corresponds to the closeness of the Kaḷḷars with the agricultural Veḷālars. We may remember that even *mullai* cultivation (of millet) was practised. We also find in Maharashtra the association of Vālmīki Koḷhā, near Jejuri, District Pune, where he is said to have waylaid merchants. There are two etymologies for the term Rāmśī. It is derived from *rānvāsī,* i.e., 'inhabitants of an uncultivable area', forest, which coresponds to the Tamil notion of *marakkuṭi*='wild, predatory communities', as contrasted with the *arakkuṭi* or 'settled agriculturists'.[69] Rāmośī has also been etymologically connected with *Rāma + vaṃśi,* i.e. 'descendants of Rāma', whom he created on his way to Laṅkā.[70] Here we recognize the connection of Vālmīki and the Rāmośīs and Beḍars who claim to have descended from the Vālmīki-Gotra.[71] The close association of bandits with kings and the recruitment of kings from the ranks of the bandits in South India may be seen reflected in the fact that

---

[64] Sontheimer, "The Mallāri/Khaṇḍobā Myth as Reflected in Folk Art and Ritual", ms.

[65] E. g. *Mārtaṇḍa Vijaya* 20.90.

[66] David Shulman, "On South Indian Bandits and Kings", in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review,* Vol. XVII, No. 3, p. 285ff.

---

[67] Shulman, op. cit., p. 304.

[68] See Sontheimer, *Birobā*.... p. 7ff.

[69] Shulman, op. cit., p. 289.

[70] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 85f. Alexander Mackintosh, *An Account of the Origin and Present Condition of the Tribe of Ramoossies, Including the Life of the Chief Oomiah Naik,* Bombay, 1833, p. 3.

[71] B. A. Saletore, *The Wild Tribes in Indian History,* Lahore, 1935, p. 170.

Beḍars became *jāgīrdāras* and *kings.*[72] At least one of the most famous Marāṭhā families is said to have this predatory background. One of the most famous hero amongst the Rāmośīs was Umājī Nāīk, a 'Sardāra' who was hanged by the British in 1832.[73] The 'pastoral area' in Maharashtra was also marked by cattle raids and numerous herostones depicting such raids, which corresponds to the Tamil *veṭcittiṇai* where the distinction between cattle-thief and hero fades.'[74] The god of the Rāmośīs is Khaṇḍobā who has close similarities with Aiyanār and Karuppan, the favourite god of the Kaḷḷars.[75] Karuppan is a violent, non-vegetarian deity who corresponds to Malla, the hill-demon who raids the *āśrama* of the Brahmin and is defeated by Śiva/Khaṇḍobā. He subsequently becomes a bhakta and doorkeeper—*dvārapāla*—of Khaṇḍobā.[76] The human counterparts of Malla, the Rāmośīs, have a special right to carry the palanquin at the hunting excursion of the God to the river on Somavatī Amāvāsyā day.[77] This may be compared to the Kaḷḷars's special right to pull their god's car. Khaṇḍobā becomes the Lord of 52 *vīras,* all demoniac godlings, whom he includes and excels. His most important temple is in Jejuri and is situated on an old route to the South, near the area associated with Vālmīki-Koḷī. The victims of Vālmīki and the

---

[72] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 50.

[73] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 68.

[74] Shulman, op. cit., p. 290.

[75] See L. Dumont, "A Structural Definition of a Folk Deity of Tamil Nad : Aiyanar, the Lord," in L. Dumont, *Religion/Politics and History in India,* Paris, 1970, pp. 20-32.

[76] *Mallāri Māhātmya* of Śrīdhara 2.115.

[77] Sontheimer, op. cit., p. 80.

Rāmośīs are said to have been caravan merchants travelling on that route. Malla himself is described as the waylayer (*mārgaghna*) who harrasses the traveller (*mārgasthā*) in one version of the *Mallāri-Māhātmya*, before he was defeated by Khaṇḍobā.[78]

Equally important as the killing of the *daitya* for the integration of the *vana* is the fact that Khaṇḍobā/Mallāri and many similar gods in South India have two wives by whom they combine heterogenous communities with different spatial and ecological backgrounds. One wife belongs to the settled agricultural/merchant community and has 'sanscritic' affiliation. The other wife belongs to a hill/forest/pastoral tribe. Thus the second wife of Murukan is Vaḷḷi from the Kuravar hill tribe. The first wife is Devasenā, the Divine Army, or Teyvayānai, the Elephant. Khaṇḍobā's second wife, Bāṇṇa in Andhra comes from the Gollas, Mailār in Karnataka has his second wife from Kuruba shepherd community. In Śrīśailam there is the legend that it was Lord Śiva who once came on a hunting expedition and fell in love with a beautiful Cencū woman whom he married. Even today Śiva is known among the Ceñcūs as Ceñcū Malliah and the members of the tribe have special privileges in the cult. In the case of Khaṇḍobā it is Mhāḷsā, said to be from the Lingāyat community which was once very influential all over the Deccan. Mhāḷsā is still found as an independent goddess.

The second wife thus comes from the forest—the forest being associated with eroticism. The second wife is consequently usually the really beloved of the god. Vaḷḷi stands for *iccai*, passion, love, emotion, and ultimately bhakti. But the second wife also symbolizes unbound nature, like Gaṅgā whom Śiva catches and regulates with his matted hair. The first wife, like Teyvayānai and Pārvatī represents *karma, action.*[79] One may say that he combines heaven and earth by his two wives, one of whom is of fair and one of dark complexion, but at the same time I want to stress that behind these wives there were and still are concrete communities in different stages of development and with different ecological background which could thus be integrated in one cult.

---

[78] *Mallāri Māhātmya* of Śrīdhara 2.28.

Very often the god manifests himself for the first time amongst the tribals in the forest and is identified with Śiva or one of his manifestations.[80] There is a very wide-spread story that a cowherd finds a cow shedding milk in an termite mound where the god is hidden and eventually manifests himself. When we view Kṛṣṇa Gopāla historically, that is Kṛṣṇa-Govardhana of the Ābhīras, and not the Kṛṣṇa of the Yādavas and the *Bhagavadgītā*[81] we have the same phenomenon. 'This Govardhana is but an anthill' says one of the antagonists of Kṛṣṇa in the *Harivaṃśa.* The

---

[79] Kamil V. Zvelebil, "A Guide to Murukan," in *Journal of Tamil Studies*, pp. 1–22, at p. 10.

[80] See, e.g. Sontheimer, "Some Incidents...," p. 112. The Hunter (Koli) and the Cowherd (Gavlī) at the origin of a Śaivite cult in the forest and the cow shedding milk over an anthill in which a *svayambhū-liṅga* is found are so widespread in the Deccan and South India (e.g. Śrīśailam) that instances could be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

[81] See the discussions in R. N. Dandekar, "Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism," in R.N. Dandekar (ed.), *Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar as an Indologist*, Poona, 1974, p. 26ff.

Kṛṣṇa who saved the cattle and the Ābhīra cowherds, was, as Ch. Vaudeville has shown, originally a spirit of the mountain, simultaneously living amongst the cowherds in human form. Thus we read in the famous passage of the *Harivaṃśa*: Upon the summit of Govardhana, Kṛṣṇa presented himself saying: "I am the manifestation of the mountain (*śailo' ham iti mūrtimān*)", and he partook of much food presented by the Gopas; whilst in his own form as Kṛṣṇa (*svenaiva Kṛṣṇo rūpeṇa*) he ascended the hill along with the cowherds and worshipped his other self...[82]

Local tradition in Govardhana on which the *vārtās* of the Vaiṣṇavas are based say that Kṛṣṇa lived in the mountain in the form of a snake. The pastoral tribes in Braj are still unaware of much of the later Brahmanical and Vaiṣṇava mythology. And, as the Vaiṣṇava *vārtās* narrate, it was only when Caitanya and the Vaiṣṇava Goswāmīs came from Bengal that Kṛṣṇa manifested himself again in his full form. First only his hand and arm emerged from the mountain top resembling a five-hooded snake. This is said to have happened on the Nāgapañcamī day—a rather unsanskritic festival—when serpents in termite mounds are worshipped in many parts of India.[83] But for the Vaiṣṇavization of Kṛṣṇa, the central focus of the Vaiṣṇava Bhakti movement, this god or *yakṣa* of the pastoralists might have become another manifestation of Śiva.

The Bhakti movement was itself a kind of protest against the empty ritual, the *karmakāṇḍa* of the *Dharmaśāstra* and the tiresomeness of settled life in the *kṣetra*. At the root was the realization that this god living in an outlying area of hills, woods, and pastures, in the free atmosphere of the tribal world was a god of immediate access and spontaneous love.[84] Many deities thus have their origin in the wilderness, on a mountain, in an anthill, often as an *svayambhū* manifestation of Śiva or as some mother goddess. Mostly the god passes through a Śaivite phase turning eventually into a Vaiṣṇava god.

---

[82] Charlotte Vaudeville, "The Govardhan Myth in Northern India," in *Indo-Iranian Journal,* 22 (1980), pp. 1—45, at p. 5.

[83] See Vaudeville, op. cit., p. 19.

In Tirupati, the famous Veṅkaṭeśvara is Viṣṇu who had hidden himself in a termite mound and was discovered by cowherds. Afterwards Viṣṇu having absented himself from Lakṣmī falls in love with Padmāvatī while on a hunt in a forest and marries her.[85] Padmāvatī is often considered to be a *yakṣī,* who lives in the forest and is worshipped by tribals. It is said that Viṣṇu in Tirupati acquired land from Varāha and upto this day one has to visit first Varāha before one goes to Veṅkaṭeśvara. Varāha cannot be just an earlier *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, but respect is paid to an earlier deity of the tribals.

---

[84] For the personal devotion, the inner religion, and unmediated vision of god through bhakti between the established 'public' religions of the "Great Tradition" and "Little Tradition" one may refer to A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva,* Penguin Books, 1973, Introduction, p. 19ff. There is a spatial aspect of bhakti : bhakti cults often originate in the "wilderness", like, e.g. in the early Pandharpur. But the ritual of pilgrimage and the worship developing in the eventual *kṣetra* and *tīrtha* may again provoke the saint to revert to inner religion which can be practised beyond *vana* and *kṣetra,* or, as Tulasīdāsa expresses it : If one protects or leaves [in order to go to the forest] the house, it will go. Tulasīdāsa says : one should dwell in between the forest and the house, in the city of God. Cited by R. D. Ranade, *Paramārtha Sopāna* (*A Source-Book of Pathway to God in Hindi Literature*). Allahabad, 1958, p. 232.

[85] *Sri Venkateswara Leela Mahathmyamu,* ch. XVI.

Let us consider the famous Pāṇḍuraṅga or Viṭhobā of Pandharpur in Maharashtra. He emerged in a pastoral-tribal context in which Gavḷīs (cowherds) and Koḷīs (fishermen, hunters, and eventually ferrymen) dominated. The pastoral communities preserve in their oral traditions that Padubāī/Padmāvatī was Viṭhobā's wife before Padmāvatī became Rukmiṇī. Some would say that Padmāvatī 'has come from the forest', similarly as in Tirupati.[86] It is rather established that the Viṭhobā cult has emerged from a Śaiva cult and Pandharpur was essentially a Śaivite *kṣetra* before it was 'vaiṣṇavized'. Besides a famous goddess called Mhasā/Masādevi (Andhra: Mhaisāmma)='Mother Buffalo' was said to be the original goddess. She is identified with Lakhubāī and the two goddesses have their shrines in the Diṇḍīravana. In fact the original cult spot in Pandharpur is this 'forest of (the Daitya) Diṇḍīra'. It was Śiva, the *nāyaga* of the Kailāsa, who is said to have assumed the form of Mallikārjuna and who killed the Daitya Diṇḍīra in the forest thus purifying the ground for the Vaiṣṇava bhakti.[87]

It is also said in the *Līḷācaritra* of Cakradhara (13th cent.) that originally Viṭhobā was a hero who died defending cattle and that a herostone (*bhaḍakhambā*, Skt. *bhaṭaskambhā*) was erected in his honour which people started worshipping.[88] This reminds us again of the Caṅkam literature and the traditional pastoral atmosphere surrounding Pandharpur may be compared with the old Tamil *mullai*. The *mullai* is associated with Māyōn corresponding to Kṛṣṇa. But according to *Puram*. 335 people in the *mullai* region originally worshipped only herostones as their gods.[89] In *Puram*. 265 it is said that the cowherds worshipped a herostone with garlands made from the flowers of the *veṅkai* tree.[90] In another passage a bard is asked by a nomad (?) to worship a herostone as benefit will accrue from this (*Puram*. 263). Bards passing the herostones should sing the favourite songs of the hero (*Malaipaṭukaṭām* 378-91).[91]

---

[86] Sontheimer, *Birobā*..... p. 51.

[87] G. D. Sontheimer, "Gopajanāṃcā dev: Śrīviṭhṭhala", in: Go. Ma. Kulakarṇī [and] Vi. Tryaṃ Śeṭe [eds.], *Rā. Ciṃ. Ḍhere Ābhinaṃdangrantha* [Festschrift for R.C. Dhere] *Mahārāṣṭrācī Sattvadhārā*, Puṇem, 1983, pp. 103–110.

---

[88] Vi. Bhi. Kolate, *saṃpādak* [ed.], *Līlācaritra*, Mumbaī, 1978, *Uttarārdha, līlā* 508, p. 656f. See the discussions by S. G. Tulpule, "The Origin of Viṭṭhala : A New Interpretation," in *ABORI, Diamond Jubilee Volume*, Poona, 1977-8, pp. 1009-1015 and G.D. Sontheimer, "Hero—and Satī-Stones of Maharashtra," in S. Settar and Günther D. Sontheimer [eds.], *Memorial Stones* Dharwad/Delhi, 1982, pp. 261ff.

[89] See V. Mahadevan, "Naṭukal valipāṭu [The Worship of Hero-Stones]", in R. Nagaswamy, *Seminar on Hero-Stones*, State Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of Tamilnadu, 1974, p. 5ff., at p. 6ff. I am thankful to Dr. A. Dhamotharan for reading with me the Tamil texts of this publication.

[90] Mahadevan, op. cit., p. 6.

[91] T. Ñānacuntaram, "Naṭukallum ilakkiyamum [The Literature on Hero-Stones]", in *Seminar on Hero-Stones*, p. 88ff.

Ultimately Vaiṣṇava bhakti discovered and transformed hero and god and Paṇdharpur became famous for its festival of bhakti in honour of Viṭhobā marked by music and dance (*nāḍanācu,* Skt. *naṭanṛtya*) according to the *Līḷācaritra* of Cakradhara.[92]

The bhakti poet with his poetry must have been a successor of the bard mentioned in the old Caṅkam literature. He transformed and reinterpreted the earlier cults and the beliefs associated with them. The erotic sentiments, the dance, and the love between Murukan and Vaḷḷi, or Māyōn/Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* were transformed into the sacred sentiments of bhakti.[93] In the case of Viṭhobā the memory that there once was a forest at Pandharpur—a forest naturally being infested by ghosts (*bhūtas*) and spirits (*vīras*)—seems to linger on in one of the *abhaṅgas* of Tukārāma on Viṭhobā. It is given a new meaning by him in the context of bhakti :

> There is a powerful ghost (*bhūta*) in Paṇḍharī.
> It seizes the visitors on their way.
> While going into the forest full of imps.
> The mind goes mad.
> Nobody should go there.
> Those who have gone, have not come back.
> Tukā went to Paṇḍharī.
> And did not come back to the world (*janma*).[94]

Pandharpur was not only situated in a pastoral-tribal area, but also at the periphery of Maharashtra and Karnataka. What Victor Turner would call 'a centre out there', the natural goal of pilgrims is also a place which had its origin in the *vana*.[95] Every year twice, in the month of Āṣāḍha (July/August) and in the month of Kārttik (October/November) the pilgrims of the Vārkarī tradition, the Vaiṣṇava bhaktas of Viṭhobā go on pilgrimage to this what they called 'city of the saints'. Their traditional route must have been already frequented by prehistorical tribal populations according to D. D. Kosambi.[96] And as if basing it on the spirit of an equalitarian tribal life, the pilgrims annually achieve a kind of a *communitas,* that is, basically an equalitarian relationship between persons without status and property.

---

[92] *Līlācaritra, ibidem.*

[93] See Zvelebil, "The Beginnings of Bhakti..., p. 253ff.

[94] *"Paṃḍharīceṃ bhūt moṭheṃ..."*
Abhaṃgācī Gāthā 2606.

Pandharpur became a holy *kṣetra* with affiliations to the *Padmapurāṇa*.[97] And Śrīdhara, the famous paṇḍit and poet composed a *Sthalamāhātmya* in Marathi, the famous *Pāṇḍuraṅgamāhātmya*.[98] Thus, as in the cult of Jagannātha, we have many layers in the history of the Pandharpur *kṣetra* all happily co-existing even today : The pastoral-tribal background with its earlier component of a proclivity to cattle-raids in the past, a famous *devī,* Śaivism, the Vaiṣṇava bhakti, and the Māhātmya of a Brahmin paṇḍit and poet.

---

[95] Victor Turner, "The Center Out There : Pilgrim's Goal", in *History of Religions,* vol. 12, 1972, pp. 192ff.

[96] *Myth and Reality,* p. 130-2.

[97] Raeside, I.M.P., "The Pāṇḍuranga-Māhātmya of Śrīdhar", in *BSOAS,* vol. XXVIII, pt. 1, 1965, pp. 6.

[98] Raeside, I.M.P., op. cit., p. 85. See also Māṇik Dhanapalavār, *Puṃḍalīka Caritra,* Haidarābād, 1972, p. 14, who refers to the *Padmapurāṇa* in which the story of Puṇḍalīka is mentioned, but not Pandharpur.

The instances could be multiplied to illustrate the dichotomy or rather "symbiotic continuity" (Zvelebil) from *vana* to *kṣetra.* With the slow spread of the *kṣetra,* and the reduction of the *vana*–whether we take this in the spatial, spiritual, religious, sociological or ecological sense–tribes were reduced to castes and assigned a place in the hierarchical system of the *kṣetra.* The direct access to and experience of the divine in the untamed nature became ritualized on a Sanskritic, Hinduized normative pattern. The impure and dangerous became ritually pure and pacified. Local traditions and oral literature gave way to some extent to the literate sanskritic culture or bhakti poetry. But this was an extremely slow process stretching over many, many centuries. There was always the natural barrier of the forest.

The forest was certainly not yet an object of commercial exploitation at the cost of the tribals. Today the tribals are much more exposed to middle class rules and notions than before. We are told by anthropologists that tribal youths, exposed to the Western urban culture are alienated from their society and apologetic about their own culture: "They are spiritually lost, miserable proletarians".[99] In other words: the so-called 'Little Tradition' of India, the *kṣetra* with its Sanskrit Culture owed much to the little communities of the tribes with their stupendous oral literature, myths, symbols, arts, religion and world view. The tribal world of the forest harboured *universal values and was in tune with nature,* a fact which traditional Indian society, itself not having lost touch with nature, acknowledged but modern society rapidly forgets.

---

[99] "Progress turns bitter for tribals", *Free Press* (Bombay), 7-9-83.

V

SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN INDIAN HISTORY

JOHANNES LAPING

Heidelberg

In a very special way I consider it as a great honour to have been invited to deliver this Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann Memorial Lecture. Although we were separated only by a couple of years in terms of age, I may rightly consider myself as a representative of the so-to-say next academic generation in succession of Anncharlott Eschmann. I never worked with her in the way previous speakers to this audience did. But I was among the students attending her classes until she left for India to take over as Director of the Branch Office of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University, in New Delhi. And I vividly recall the atmosphere of those classes, which were marked by her unconventional friendly and personal style. Anncharlott Eschmann never declaimed her lectures down on us ; rather she made us feel that she accepted us as colleagues, even though we were junior and unexperienced in many respects. Against this background, what a great shock it was to receive the news of her untimely demise !

In presenting this lecture, I may be touching upon several sensitive points of Indian cultural history and society, which might provoke a lot of controversy even. But I am sure, Anncharlott Eschmann would have regarded them worth of consideration, she would have brought them out with greater clarity in her enlightened manner, and even where we could not have agreed, we would certainly have had thorough discussions on them.

The topic I have chosen for presentation here is the interrelations and interactions of scientific achievements and insights on the one hand, and religious concerns on the other, in Indian history. The great significance of religion in India throughout history and till today is certainly undisputed. And I may not be able to contribute substantially new aspects to that. Also it is not my intention to elaborate on the history of science or the sciences in India. The focal point of this paper, instead, will be: how do science and religion, with so obviously different concerns, coexist?—When trying for a very brief outline of what science and what religion would mean, and in comparable terms, I found the following statement in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics quite useful:

> "Science is empirical in method and aim: it seeks to discover the laws of concrete being and becoming and to formulate these in the simplest possible terms. These terms are the immediate data of experience or verifiably derived therefrom...
>
> "Religion, on the other hand, implies a recognition—practical, emotional, and intellectual—of a higher order of reality than is reached in sense-experience. It means the recognition of an unseen universe,

> which throws light on the riddles of the observed world...
>
> "...The religious language is not scientific language, but with different concepts and necessarily more metaphorical; its aim is not the scientific aim, for it seeks after interpretation, not description. In short, science and religion are incommensurables."[1]

Inspite of all incommensurability of science and religion, as pointed out in this statement, there is a lot of intrinsic interaction between these two spheres of human experience and achievement, and especially in the Indian context as will be shown. To be clear on one more point: I shall be discussing mainly science of a pre-modern type by which term, however, I do not mean to discriminate in a negative sense. To the contrary, one might even say, that several branches of science in the earlier history of India display certain features of a modern science concept, as would ultimately comprise, e. g., the application of mathematical hypotheses to Nature, experimental methods, etc.[2] On the other hand, one must be aware of certain limitations to the traditional sciences in India in view of the social and religious framework. After a brief survey of the branches of science in India, I shall try to discuss a few very special cases of interaction between science and religion in history and until today.

---

[1] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* ed. by J. Hastings, *s.v.* "Science", Vol. 11, London, 1920, p. 259.

[2] *Cf.*: J. Needham, *The Grand Tradition,* London, 1969, p. 15.

One of the main works on the history of science in India[3] lists as individual sciences : astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemical practices and alchemy, agriculture, botany and zoology. Enumerations in other works on the subject are not fundamentally different and may incorporate as another important discipline geometry. To talk of sciences or branches of science in this way is proof to a modern conception of science. Here, the different branches of science as they are found today are put back into history. From this point of departure, there will be no difficulty at all in tracing elements of any modern science even in remains of greatest antiquity. We find, e. g., a hymn in praise of plants in the Ṛgveda.[4] But can such an event truly be called the beginning of botanical science ? Of course, it is legitimate and good scholarly tradition to rethink and reassess earlier insights with every progressive step. But in the Indian context, we are in the fortunate position that from very early times there is at least a certain spectrum of "sciences" in a more or less rudimentary form, which doubtlessly carry in themselves the potential for development and expansion in later times towards what can be called scientific disciplines matching even with modern classifications of science.

The situation in India is very particular in so far as the earliest history is somehow obscured in mythology. The earliest pieces of Literary evidence clearly belong to the sacred complex. Another particular fact is that a number of individual sciences, in the above sense, emerge from and within this sacred complex. The Veda is "sacred knowledge". The *vedāṅgas* are the "auxiliary sciences", they are instrumental, literally the "members", for the attainment of that sacred knowledge. The *vedāṅgas* are six in number, and they are designated as: phonetics (*śikṣā*), ritual (*kalpa*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), etymology (*nirukta*), metrics (*chandaḥ*) and astronomy/astrology (*jyotiṣa*). It may suffice to point only at the direction of development which these "sciences" took, or otherwise, which of the later established sciences can be traced back to these. In this sense, astronomy in its elaborated form takes its origin from Vedic *jyotiṣa,* the auxiliary science for establishing a calender of Vedic ceremonies. The discipline of geometry owes its origin to Vedic *kalpa,* the auxiliary science of the ritual, including the construction of sacrificial altars. Mathematics, that science which is regarded as the *sine qua non* of modern natural science, and the unique contribution of India to which is the cipher zero, is again closely related to Vedic *kalpa* and *jyotiṣa.* The remaining four *vedāṅgas* may be summarized under what today is called linguistics, which discipline is of course not a part of natural science as it is conceived today, but of the humanities or arts. As for the remaining branches of science in modern enumerations, there is little more in the earliest sources than just stray references to a number of items which are being dealt with in a more systematic manner only in a later period. Besides that, disciplines like medicine, agriculture and chemical practices have—in their beginning—more something of a craft or a special skill than of an abstractive science. And as a matter of historical fact, the origin of these lie outside the scope of the sacred complex. Even in the case of medicine, where some basic knowledge of anatomy might have been gained from the slaughtering of sacrificial animals, this kind of relation with the sacred complex is at least very doubtful, since those specialists involved in the killing and subsequent dividing of the sacrificial animal must have been most probably more a sort of specialists in religious or ritual matters than in physical or anatomical matters. And a combination of both skills in one person is highly unlikely, as will be seen later.

---

[3] D. M. Bose, S. N. Sen, B. V. Subbarayappa (eds.), *A Concise History of Science in India,* New Delhi, 1971.

[4] Ṛgveda X.97.

There is no doubt that those above mentioned sciences, originally closely affiliated to the Veda and Vedic religion, in the course of time emancipated themselves from that religious background and took on a more secular outlook, too. This is history. But as their origins are found in the sacred complex, I would like to make a distinction of them as a group and call them *sacerdotal* sciences, in comparison to what I would like to call *secular* science.

We will now have to look for a proof of secular science in Indian history. The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya gives a discussion on the enumeration of sciences, and ultimately arrives at a list of four, namely: philosophy, the three Vedas, economics and the science of politics. Some of the views quoted by Kauṭilya go to the extent of denying the status of science to the Vedas and even to philosophy.[5] From the kind of Kauṭilya's exposition of these four sciences, however, it becomes clear that the prime aim of religion, or as he puts it: the three Vedas, as well as the other three, is made entirely instrumental to the maintenance of the power structure in *status quo*. Take, for instance, the famous episode of two secret agents discussing in public the relation between king and subjects.[6] In that respect, one might like to say, and with the probable exception of philosophy, that these sciences as enumerated by Kauṭilya have also more something of a craft, even though his dealing with the science of politics is brought to a considerable degree of abstraction.[7]

---

[5] Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra (=KA) I.2.

As we are talking here of the interactions of science and religion, it may not be insignificant that the original Arthaśāstra was lost over a vast period of time, regarded as a sort of secret science, and virtually banned. The measures advocated in the Arthaśāstra for the maintenance or attainment of political power, apart from being sometimes quite unusual, as a whole are largely disregarding genuine religious concerns. At the same time, the purpose of maintaining the social and public order was served with more or entire conformity to the tenets of Brahmanic religion by other works, namely the *rājadharma* sections of the Dharmaśāstras or the epics. Kauṭilya's practical outlook on worldly matters was brushed aside, as were the materialist schools of philosophy in ancient India.

When examining closer, what Kauṭilya had mentioned as yet another science, economics, we will find that throughout the larger part of history in India economics has remained more a craft than an abstract science. This is amply proved by its subdivision into the branches of agriculture, cattle rearing and trade,[8] and the later included branches of manufacture and banking. Being essentially crafts and concerned with worldly affairs, they are, ideally at least, not easily compatible with the orthodox Hindu inclination towards metaphysical matters. This kind of conflict is brought out even more clearly by the fact of the low social status assigned by Brahmanic orthodoxy to population groups of those occupations. And it is this peculiar situation, which in the history of Indian studies has been held responsible by certain scholars, like Max Weber, for some characteristic non-developments in Indian history, such as the non-occurrence of a capital expansive economy in pre-British times. Whereas others, like Karl Marx, even more sharply talked of the stagnant Asiatic mode of production and oriental despotism.

---

[6] *Cf.*: KA I.13.2–14.

[7] *Cf.*: KA XV.1.

[8] KA I.4.1.

Before turning from these practical sciences to such of a more naturalistic conception, it may be useful to consider the conceptual basis of the few topics touched upon so far. The basic distinction that arises here is between worldly pursuits and the transcendence of this world as is the primary concern of religion. Hindu religion, however, provides a dual concept with a certain potential for accommodation of both extremes. The key terms for this, *pravṛtta* and *nivṛtta,* reflect exactly the two ways of looking at our physical existence. A few lines from the Manusmṛti may be quoted for illustration of this point :

> "The acts prescribed by the Veda are of two kinds, such as procure an increase of happiness and cause a continuation (of mundane existence, pravṛtta), and such as ensure supreme bliss and cause a cessation (of mundane existence, nivṛtta).
>
> "Acts which secure (the fulfilment of) wishes in this world or in the next are called pravritta (such as

> cause a continuation of mundane existence); but acts performed without any desire (for a reward), preceded by (the acquisition) of (true) knowledge, are declared to be nivritta (such as cause a cessation of mundane existence).
>
> "He who sedulously performs acts leading to future births (pravritta) becomes equal to the gods; but he who is intent on the performance of those causing a cessation (of existence, nivritta) indeed, passes beyond the reach of the five elements."[9]

Both these terms are in their original context not exactly opposites. The ultimate goal of both ways, and we may add here the other pair or even triad of *puruṣārtha, artha/kāma* and *dharma,* is an improvement of our present condition with a view towards final salvation or *mokṣa.* But lastly and in actual practice, and as can be observed in history, a crucial distinction between them is established, which leads to a *de facto* discrimination of the worldly path, of which the afore mentioned abstraction is only the mildest possible form. In many cases practical sciences or crafts are assigned more or less a stain of ritual impurity, which ultimately may be regarded as an abstraction of the physical impurity incurred when handling material matters. And along with that goes social discrimination. This holds true especially in the cases of agriculture, of metallurgy and pottery as the antecedent technologies of later chemistry and alchemy, and in the case of medicine. And this is one of the predominant features of interaction between science and religion in Indian history.

---

[9] Manusmṛti XII.88-90. The translation is taken from: G. Bühler, *The Laws of Manu,* Oxford 1886 (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXV).

It may suffice here in this first overview to mention that the natural sciences of botany and zoology develop mostly in the wake of medical science and may even be regarded as originally auxiliary to that. Earlier references are strewn over a mass of literature, and only later on, as part of medical science, they can be considered as taking on shape as distinct disciplines. From then on and under the influence of the mother science medicine, their main character appears as one of observation of nature, of classifying and systematizing of whatever is observed. But for all that, so much reminiscent of the earlier philosophical systems of India, and the probably very little actual contact with possibly impure matter, it should not be forgotten that basically the origin of botany and zoology lies in medical science or the art or craft of healing. And we shall now have to see what was the fate of that science in the course of history and under the impact of Hindu religion.

Before going into these details, I want to come back briefly to the question of secularity. And we shall have to examine what position the science of medicine takes in this respect. In its very first stages of development, medicine in India is certainly not entirely free from intentions to explain and deal with the natural phenomena of illness and health from a super-naturalistic point of view. Especially the Atharvavedic beginnings of medicine are characterized by a strong undertone of magic. A more clearly perceivable concern for rational elements and requirements in this field, such as empirical observation, its systematic interpretation and organization with the help of naturalistic theories, is coming about only later. Of course, with the interference of theories, direct observation is again being transcended, however this is a necessary step for the progress of the discipline. And for this, the importance of a close relation to empirical observation may be stressed once again. As such only, philosophical speculation can and will be a ferment in the formation of science: if and when it corresponds to or draws on observation. Otherwise it would remain speculation or end up with contradictions. This reminds in a way of the three sources of medical knowledge mentioned in the Caraka-Saṃhitā, viz.: authoritative instruction, direct observation, and inference.[10] Only if these three go together without contradiction, there can be true progress in science. What I want to stress is that in this light, and inspite of very humble beginnings marked by quasi-religious attempts at dealing with natural phenomena, there is, in principle, no concern for the superrational, and there is no affiliation to the sacred complex found in the ancient Indian system of medicine, even when one should argue that the earliest knowledge of anatomy may have originated from the slaughtering of sacrificial animals. And even something like "compassion", the concern for the suffering of other beings, as a motivating factor for the development of medical craft. belongs to a distinctly different category than that specific sacred complex. On the other hand. it is not yet made out clearly, whether medicine especially in India had not another root of origin in military activities, i.e. the restoration of physical capabilities when afflicted in war and fighting. The ancient Indian Suśruta is considered as the father of surgery. And then. definitely, there is no religious concern to medicine at all. In that sense, it will be justified to talk of medicine as a originally secular science–and in the Indian context probably the only secular science.

---

[10] Caraka-Saṃhitā (=Car.) III.4.

We have in the classical system of medicine in India, Āyurveda, which is still in practice today, from quite an early period "a clear realization that the functioning of the body was controlled by natural law and that diseases were not normally caused by the gods or demons."[11] And we have on the other side, coexisting and sometimes interfering with that, throughout the course of history, another type of medicine with probably Atharvavedic origins, which may be characterized basically as "sympathetic magic".[12] But this is not medical science, not a "science of life", not Āyurveda in its full meaning. If we look at some of the elaborate theories and concepts of Āyurveda, such as the doctrine of the five gross elements (*pañcamahābhūta*), the three morbid elements (*tridoṣa*), the seven body constituents (*saptadhātu*), the vital spots (*marman*), etc., we will find no aspect of religion interfering at all. Even if it is accepted that philosophical speculation is originally preceded by religion, and that there is some relationship between, e.g., Sāṃkhya-Philosophy and early medico-philosophical theories, one can see in this context that this serves only one purpose: to make natural phenomena intelligible and to find out ways and means to counteract their bad effects on living creatures. However, to talk of certain concepts in Āyurvedic medicine means only one side of the picture, and is an abstraction from the actual tradition and condition of Āyurveda. The real situation presents us with a queer picture. For in the extant classical Saṃhitās, representing the earliest strata of purposely medical literature, a critical observer will find professional medical concepts and practices, and a lot of deliberations on a number of subject which would fall into the category of religion, or anyway have nothing to do with a strictly medical rational concern. Not only this. But in the same medical literature arguments are to be found, pointing even to the irrelevance of any non-medical issue in this context of medicine and medicine alone.[13] And the factors, on which medicine depends, are but four : the physician, the drugs, the attendant and the patient; the respective qualities required in each of them are again entirely technical and have no other relation but a strictly medical one.[14] Apart from this formal and logical inconsistency, there are several instances where these two points of departure, the medical-scientific and the religious-speculative, simply cannot be reconciled even though both of them are put forward in one and the same text, at least in that form of the text which has come down to us. Only two illustration of this point may be given here : the doctrine of *karma*, and the attitude towards the cow.

---

[11] A. L. Basham, The Practice of Medicine in Ancient and Medieval India, p. 22; in: C. Leslie (ed.), *Asian Medical Systems*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1976, pp. 18–43.

[12] A. A. Macdonnell, A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London, 1912, *s.v.* "*bheṣaja*".

The first question that arises in view of the *karma*-doctrine is related directly to the above mentioned discussion on relevant topics in medical matters. Further on, and the other way round, one may ask pin-pointedly: if the *karma*-doctrine is basically accepted, what could then be the use of any deliberate interference with matters considered already predetermined by one's former actions or life? Ultimately, this would come up to challenging one's fate, and thereby to questioning the whole social order established upon a fundamental belief like that. The early medical writers, however, consciously or under the pressure of religious norms, at least try to integrate or incorporate certain aspects of the *karma*-doctrine into the web of their medical considerations, such as in the case of embryology and epidemiology.[15] But still, one may like to call this basically an unreconcilable contradiction. And especially something like the *karma*-doctrine against the medical context brings up against that great distinction between worldly life and other-worldly concerns. The Caraka-Saṃhitā is one of the oldest available medical treatises and still held in greatest esteem by today's Āyurvedic practitioners and scholars; although Āyurvedic education nowadays draws on numerous other source materials, and the study of Caraka-Saṃhitā is probably mostly of historical interest only. But Caraka is still considered to be the authority. And it is the Caraka-Saṃhitā which is full of such clearly non-medical issues. They are also found in Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya-Saṃhitā of Vāgbhaṭa, to a lesser extent, and in Suśruta-saṃhitā. The last case, however, is different. Suśruta is believed to be the father of surgery. And surgery, as a branch of medicine, most probably had its origin in the military complex. This means that there can hardly be any relation with or interference of super-natural powers in cases where surgical measures are required, since such cases would have been brought about deliberately by man himself. This may explain Suśruta's reluctance to deal with *karma* as an etiological factor.[16]

---

[13] *Cf.* :- Car. III.8.54:

[14] *Cf.* : Car. I.9.6-9. See also : D. Chattopadhyaya, Case for a Critical Analysis of the Caraka-Saṃhitā, p. 227ff. ; in : *Studies in the History of Science in India,* ed. by D. Chattopadhyaya, New Delhi, 1982, Vol. I, pp. 209–238.

---

[15] *Cf.*: M. Weiss, Caraka Saṃhitā on the Doctrine of Karma; in: W. D. O'Flaherty (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions,* Berkeley, 1980, pp. 90–115.

A second case is that of the cow, which is of undisputed sanctity throughout Hindu India and its entire history. Again, the Caraka-Saṃhitā contains numerous references, giving expression to the great veneration for the cow, and is thus entirely in line with Hindu orthodoxy. Now there is a beautiful and great principle of the Āyurvedic tradition : that there is no substance on this world which cannot be used as a medicine ! And the same Caraka-Saṃhitā, at least in the version available to us now, also discusses in an appreciably systematic manner, the specific values and medicinal properties of the meats of a number of classified animals, including that of the cow.[17] Apart from advising the use of cow's meat in specified cases, such as consumption etc., there seems to be an awareness also of a possible disliking of such items on the side of the patients for religious, aesthetic or other reasons. But as the physician's main concern is to cure the patient, and in certain cases just this prescription may need to be followed, Caraka does not refrain from even advising tricks how to circumvent a patient's probable preconceptions about certain items. Therefore, such meats may be prepared like vegetables,[18] or others may be given in the name of animals not commonly falling under such restrictions[19] ; something which is, of course, in open contradiction to all terms of traditional morality.

---

[16] *Cf.* : Suśruta-Saṃhitā (=Suśr.) I.24.
See also : M. Weiss, *op. cit.* (note 14, above), p. 93.

[17] *Cf.* : Car. I.27.

[18] Car. VI.14.126.

Like this there is a number of further cases, all of which would come up more or less to the point of what one may again like to call an irreconcilable facing of the orthodox moral value system and strictly medical-scientific requirements. And still an amalgamation of both is found in one and the same scripture, namely the Caraka-Saṃhitā. The possible answer to this lies in the history and historical development of medical science in India. The origins of rational medical considerations may be sought in the more or less secular period around or before the time of the Buddha, which also gave rise to those philosophical systems more outspokenly based on the observation of nature, like Sāṃkhya etc. Our earliest medical treatises in their extant form, Caraka-Saṃhitā and Suśruta-Saṃhitā, date of course from a later time and underwent certain redactions until they received that final form in which they have come down to us. This is especially the case with Caraka-Saṃhitā which was at least twice redacted or revised, although not all strata of this are easily identified. Even so, it appears justified to assume that every redactor is naturally under the impression of the philosophical currents as well as the moral norms of his time, and that this may flow into his redactory work, too, consciously or not. The moral standards advocated in the extant Caraka-Smhitā are practically identical with those of the later Dharmaśāstras, which fact is again an indicator towards the different historical strata in this text. But that still does not explain the above mentioned contradictions. Since at the same time what may be considered as the hard-core of rational medical reasoning continues to be recorded. In that way, the apparent contradictions, or the anyhow strange incorporation of religious and quasi-religious issues, greatly irrelevant to the medico-scientific concern, cannot possibly be viewed else but as a kind of surrender of the scientific mind to the censorship of the law-makers, in order to avoid extinction of their scientific tradition altogether, as is the main argument of D. Chattopadhyaya.[20] Apart from what has been discussed above as those rational medical issues obviously threatening the primacy of religion in social life, one must also recall the low social status assigned to the doctors in the religious normative literature, the Dharmaśāstras.[21] With this, we have another and most serious case of interference of religion with science. And when we follow the known history of Indian medicine or Ayurveda, we may find some more expressions of this type of interaction.

---

[19] Car. VI.8.149-157.

Cf. : D. Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit.* (note 13, above), p. 216ff.

In the course of centuries, however, some adjustment seems to have been arrived at. We do not know whether this sharp discrimination of the Manusmṛti and other texts ever was a historical fact. As medical scientific literature continued to be written for Centuries, it appears that there must have been some consolidation over this issue: Good physicians, today as well as in the past, are certainly well reputed among the general public, their clientele. But we have to distinguish carefully. The common man may be fascinated by the doctor's skill and obvious "power" of healing, or his command over what the patient himself may consider to be super-natural powers responsible for his ailment. This reminds of the Atharvavedic origins of medicine, where basically magical charms, when successful, confer an aura of power on this specialist, which would endanger the established power position of the priestly class. (It may again not be insignificant in this context that the Atharvaveda was for a long period denied the status of a Veda). And this may be another cause for the discrimination of the medical profession as a whole, although such medicine of magic as known from the Atharvaveda has most probably nothing to do with the knowledge of healing, of physical and physiological processes, derived from experience, observation, and abstracted towards the goal of successful intervention against a disease, which alone is the true Āyurveda. In day-to-day practice, of course, both the knowledge of healing and the—rightly or not—assumed power of healing mix together more often than not, and such may have been the argument of the law-makers, too : another case of interaction between science and religion, knowledge and power.

---

[20] *Cf.*: D. Chattopadhyaya, *Science and Society in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1979; *Cf.* also: D. Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit.* (note 13, above).

[21] *Cf.*: Manusmṛti III.152; III.180; IV.212; IV.220.

I am coming to a last case. Āyurveda is being praised for its holistic outlook on health and illness. This is something which can be amply demonstrated especially from the above mentioned Saṃhitās of Caraka, Suśruta and Vāgbhaṭa. Later works of the medical scientific tradition, however, show a growing interest in technical matters alone. Āyurveda, the "science of life", one may say, turns into Cikitsāśāstra, the technical science of curing patients' ailments.

No doubt, whatever were the limitations of that age to their science, these later authors were able to advance and deepen medical science. And it would also be worthwhile to study in detail the concessions they had to make in view of the power of religious norms. But what once constituted the Āyurvedic holistic approach, the recognition of a wide range of factors, some of which I had indicated above, and which were considered responsible and involved in the outbreak of a disease, as well as in the process of restoration of health, and—equally important—in the preservation of health, is getting limited down under the impact of a professionalism more and more concerned with the disease of a man, rather than with the man himself. The overwhelming importance attached to, e.g., the *doṣa*-doctrine and other diagnostic means, such as pulse examination, is an indicator of this. A similar development can be observed today, where Āyurvedic medicine appears to being reduced to mere herbal and mineral drugs, whereas diagnostic tools are more and more being taken over from cosmopolitan medicine. But that is a different story. From this side, there is of course little scope for what in earlier times was a comprehensive "science of life". Along with the turning business-like of the medical profession goes, quite logically, its loosing interest in other tasks of medicine which would be less profitable, namely health education and the positive outlook on health.

The preventive aspect in the Āyurvedic system of medicine, so prominent in the earlier literature, and still today thought to be a unique feature in the entire world history of medicine, is almost completely dropped from the professional priority list. There are beautiful expositions on healthy living (*svasthavṛtta*) in the ancient Saṃhitās, sometimes quite consistent with the great Āyurvedic concepts.[22] And there are others, where we again come across that strange mixture of clearly medically relevant topics and of others in which their relevance to health is not easily or not at all recognized. The key word to this is *sadvṛtta,* rendered in our days mostly as "mental hygiene". But what it means in actual fact is basically in conformity with the propositions of the Dharmaśāstra : obedience towards the King, Brāhmaṇas, Cow, Elders etc. And it is again the much venerated Caraka-Saṃhitā which is full of such promulgation on *sadvṛtta,* for reasons outlined above.[23] Moreover, the whole subject of *svasthavṛtta,* healthy living or hygiene, and then of course inclusive of anything like "mental" hygiene and "social" hygiene, is falling into the embrace of religious normative literature. Whatever were the historical conditions that possibly made something like social hygiene necessary for the survival of the population is yet to be explored. But it is quite clear that the main concern of religion and of social powers based on religious beliefs is substantially different from originally medical or rational scientific concerns.

The process of religion penetrating into the sphere of medicine, however, as has been mentioned, starts already with the Caraka-Saṃhitā, at least in the final version of that text. Apart from that, there is little evidence to show that and how the subject of *svasthavṛtta* was further developed.

---

[22] *Cf.* : Suśr. VI.64 ; Car. I.5-8.

Cf. also : Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya-Saṃhitā I.2 & 3.

[23] *Cf.* : Car. I.5.-8.

Cf. also : Suśr. IV.24.

Rather we find the same rules and advices on positive health of the good old Caraka-Saṃhitā in exactly that hotch-potch style being constantly repeated down to the present age and even in the modern textbooks of Āyurvedic colleges. And no critical thought is given to the necessary distinction between the different historical and social contexts of Caraka's time and ours' on the one side, and between the medical, rather worldly concern for physical well-being, and the religious concern for the ultimate transcendence of physical existence on the other, not to speak of its implications for social life.

It is most probably for such reasons that Āyurvedic medicine in its historical development until the present time failed to take on a progressive outlook with respect to positive health and the concept of prevention, as allopathic or cosmopolitan medicine started to take on in the late 19th century and began to resume lately. And this, although there was, right from the beginning of medical science in India, an innate potential to this effect, more than in any other known historical system of medicine.

Even as ideas on maintenance of health and prevention of diseases were probably brought closer to the masses under the impact of religious normative literature during medieval times, this meant rather a process of parochialization than propagation of health ideals. The primary concern in this process was hardly with the healthy and other conditions of the people, but with the maintenance of the established social order. Whatever might have been an ideal of a welfare state in the earlier history of India under probably Buddhist influence, is observed as drifting away from the pragmatic pursuit of the same towards mere propaganda—at most. In the Arthaśāstra, mentioned above. we find a nearly perfect organization of the state, comprehensive, and going into such details as sanitary constructions, housing, keeping stock of medicines, etc. Hardly anything of this is continued in the later religious normative literature. The focus there is shifted towards the moral duties, e. g. of the king, which may or may not include a welfare concept. But what is neglected is the pragmatic side of it, its implementation. This seems widely confirmed from the late ancient and medieval periods of Indian history upto the 19th century, when the British colonial rulers began thinking about it and decided to do something. Therefore, unless one sees a welfare concept—in whatever wider framework—really implemented, one may feel inclined to doubt the welfare orientation of an otherwise comprehensive concept such as *dharma* or moral duty, and one may instead find, as said before, that predominantly this serves nothing else but the maintenance of the established social order.

Finally, and to come back to medical science, a concept like "Health for all", which fits strongly with the welfare concept, contains an element that goes against the traditional, hierarchical, social order. It smells of something like egalitarianism, which is not too familiar with the traditional Indian social doctrine. But lastly, this is the point to which all truly scientific progress should lead : to serve man on an equal base, irrespective of his class, colour, creed, sex, etc.

Of course, there are in the realm of science in many respects powers at work which may be beyond our (present) intellectual capacity, and we may have to live with them in some way or other. It has been a traditional process that he who knows the laws of acting of such powers, or claims to know, gets power himself, becomes participant in their wielding. Put into historical perspective, in the Indian context this process begins from the Vedas. The "sacred knowledge" of the Vedas over time becomes transmuted into a socio-religious normative power. But then there is another knowledge or science, which is not sacred, and moreover with a potential that might ultimately shatter the base upon which the former power had been established.

There was in Indian history no institution like that of the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church, and there is in the history of science in India no case known that is exactly comparable to Galileo's. Rather, there were other subtle forces to push creation claims through, upon which I have tried to throw some light. We have on the one hand those sciences which emerge out of the sacerdotal context (*vedāṅgas*). In the course of their further development they occupy certain niches in the whole human, social and political set-up, without, however, threatening the established social order at any time. Even when the links with their origin in the Veda becomes merely formal, occupation with these sciences is socially accepted. Moreover, it conforms with the Brahmanic ideal of pure learning, detached from worldly pursuits. On the other hand, there are a few sciences which do not have this sanctifying link with the Vedas, and even have a turn towards practical art or craft. Both these facts may originally have been accountable for some sort of discrimination against such practical or applied sciences. In a few cases, however. where there was a potential considered by the established authorities to undermine in final consequence their own position. The result of this conflict led to near extinction (in the case of politics) or to a considerable digression from the practical pursuits and their logical requirements (in the case of medicine).

SAPTA/AṢṬA-MĀTṚKĀ IMAGES IN ORISSA

Thomas Donaldson

Cleveland State University

In the earliest myths of the origin of a specific set of *mātṛkās* (mothers), there are seven who are created to help Ambikā to defeat the demon Raktabīja, the powerful ally of Śumbha and Niśumbha. In the *Devī-māhātmya* (*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa,* 88.12-22) they represent the *śaktis* of Devas while in the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (30.1-15) they emerge from the Devī herself. The seven are Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṃhī and Indrāṇī while Cāmuṇḍā and Śivadūtī are emanations of the Goddess herself and are not considered as forming part of the group. Other texts which list seven *mātṛkas* include the *Matsya Purāṇa* (261.24-38), the *Agni Purāṇa* (50.18-25), the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (III.73), the *Śiva Purāṇa* (Vāyavīyasaṃhitā, II.31.65-66), the *Kalingattupparaṇi* (v.17)), the *Īśānaśiva Gurudeva Paddhati* (ch. 30), two lists in the *Śrītattvanidhi* (ch. 7), and the *Suprabhedāgama* where they were created by Brahmā for the purpose of killing the demon Niṛṛita. In each of these texts Cāmuṇḍā replaces Nṛsiṃhī and this is the usual list supported by iconographic data. Seven is also the number of *mātṛkas* given in the preamble of the inscriptions of early Cāḷukyan kings, who are described as the descendants of Hārītī nurtured by the seven Mothers, though their names are not given.[1] The Sangam epic, *Silappadikāram* (*circa* 6th-7th century), also mentions, *Saptamātṛkās* though we are not given their names.[2] In essence, as pointed out by Harper, the *Saptamātṛkās* as appear in sculpture from the 5th century onward, consist of a heptad of the *śaktis* of six major gods plus Cāmuṇḍā who is a Devī-Śakti and thus the extraordinary potent force of the Great Goddess herself. Their sculptural alignment, beginning with Brāhmī (creation) and ending with Cāmuṇḍā (destruction), accordingly has a cosmological significance suggesting the birth and death of the universe : "the passing from one *mātṛkā* to the next is to progress along the road to emancipation—a spiritual genesis beyond life, beyond rebirth, beyond time".[3]

In the *Varāha Purāṇa* (27.1-39), on the other hand, eight *mātṛkās* were created to help Śiva in his battle against Andhaka and they are associated with mental qualities which are morally bad : lust with Yogeśvarī ; anger with Māheśvarī ; avarice with Vaiṣṇavī ; arrogance with Brāhmī ; infatuation with Kaumārī ; malice with Indrāṇī ; wickedness with Yamī ; and jealousy with Vārāhī.[4] Eight is a particularly popular number, especially with Tantric texts where they are associated with *yoginīs* and Bhairavas, with *mantras* and *yantras*, with Caṇḍikā or Mahālakṣmī generally being added to the standard *Saptamātṛkā* list, as in the *Liṅga Purāṇa* (82.96) where Āgneyikā is probably another name for Mahālakṣmī ; in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (Lalitā-māhātmya, 44.109-16) ; the *Devī Purāṇa* (37.83-90) ; the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (XII.11.57-58) ; the *Agni Purāṇa* (144.27-28) ; the *Viśvakarma-śilpa* (2.82) ; the *Kulacūḍāmaṇi Nigama* (ch. 8) ; the Nityaṣoḍaśikārṇava of the *Vāmakeśvara-tantra* (8.126ff) ; the *Prapañcasāra-tantra* (ch. 3) ; the *Mantramahodadhi* (3.17-18) ; and the *Tantrasāra*. In a second list in the *Tantrasāra* the *Aṣṭamātṛkās* are Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Nārāyaṇī, Kaumārī, Aparājitā, Cāmuṇḍā, Vārāhī and Nṛsiṃhī.[5] In the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (58.43-46) Cāmuṇḍā is replaced by Nṛsiṃhī while elsewhere (63.87-88) the eight *yoginīs* of Kauśikī are Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Vaiṣṇavī, Nṛsiṃhī, Aindrī and Śivadūtī. In another list in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (IX.50.46-100) Mahālakṣmī is replaced by Nṛsiṃhī while in still another list (V.28.13-33) Cāmuṇḍā is replaced by Yamī in addition to Nṛsiṃhī replacing Mahālakṣmī. In his *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* (57, 56), Varāhamihira (6th century) is silent about both the number and names of these goddesses, simply stating that the *mātṛkās* are to be made with cognizances of the gods

---

[1] V. V. Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* Vol. IV (Ootacamund, 1955), p. 126.

[2] *The Silappadikāram,* translated by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar (London, 1939), pp. 247-48.

[3] Katherine Anne Harper, *An Iconological Study of the Origins and Development of the Saptamātṛkās,* unpublished dissertation (U.C.L.A., 1977), pp. 191-95.

[4] In the *Matsya Purāṇa* (179.1-90) version Śiva created nearly two hundred *mātṛkās* to help in his battle against Andhaka.

Afterwards, when they were continuing to be destructive, Viṣṇu created 32 *mātṛkās* to subdue those created by Śiva. In the *Kūrma Purāṇa* (1.15.119-237), on the other hand, Viṣṇu created 100 *mātṛkās* to help Śiva.

[5] Pratapaditya Pal, *Hindu Religion and Iconology According to the Tantrasāra* (Los Angeles, 1981), p. 9.

corresponding to their names. Utpala (9th century), in commenting on this passage, names eight—Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Raudrī, Kaumārī, Aindrī, Yamī, Vāruṇī, and Kauberī; he then adds that there are other *mātṛgaṇa* like Nṛsiṃhī, Vārāhī, and Vaināyakī, which are to be understood.[6]

In the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa* (Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, 64.87-88) there are nine *mātṛkās* named in the worship of Durgā, the nine being Vaiṣṇavī, Brāhmī, Raudrī, Aindrī, Māheśvarī, Nṛsiṃhī, Vārāhī, Kārttikī and Sarva-Maṅgalā while elsewhere in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (67.14-15) there is a list of ten, consisting of Brāhmī, Bhairavī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Nṛsiṃhī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā and Caṇḍikā. There is also a list of ten in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (Lalitā-māhātmya, 7.72-74), the ten being Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, Caṇḍikā, Tripurā, Ambikā, Vaiṣṇavī, Bhairavī, Kālī and Mahendrī. Other texts which include more than eight include the *Skanda Purāṇa* (Kāśī-khaṇḍa, 83.33 of the Uttarārdha) and the *Devī Purāṇa* (ch. 87). In the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* the list is expanded to twelve, the *mātṛkās* being Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā, Vaiṣṇavī, Nṛsiṃhī, Śivadūtī, Kāpālinī, Revatī and Akasā while in subsequent ritual literature the names of as many as sixteen *mātṛkās* are mentioned with Gaurī at the beginning.[7] In the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, thirty-two *mātṛkās* are said to have been created by Nṛsiṃha though only twenty-four names have survived. In the *nyāsa* rite of the goddess Tripurā in the *Tantrasāra* fifty mothers are invoked who with Tripurā make fifty-one, the number thus being in conformity with the total number of letters in the alphabet. In the *Jñānārṇava* the number is also fifty and they are invoked to reside in the fifty parts of the adept's body. In these two works the importance of the alphabet, basic to all *mantras,* is associated with the *pīṭha* concept in Śāktism, the *pīṭhas* being equated with parts of the body.[8] In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (Lalitā-māhātmya, 44.1-51), where the *nyāsa* rites (assigning various parts of the body to *Śaktis*) are described and likewise correspond to the letters of the alphabet and to *pīṭhas,* the pilgrimage centers being internal rather than external, it is stated that the disciple should place the eight *mātṛkās* in due order,

---

[6] J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956), p. 504.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 504.

> on the head, to the left, left-knee right knee, right shoulder and left shoulder. Mothers are Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍa, and Mahālakṣmī. These should be known in due order by the learned men. He shall place the right deities of the Mudrās on these eight positions and place the remaining two on the head and the foot.[9]

Although *mātṛkā* worship was widespread throughout Orissa, with images appearing as early as the 7th century, it was particularly popular during the Somavaṃśī period (*circa* A.D. 931-1110) with some of the images, as at Jājpur, being monumental in size. In the *Mādalā Pāñji* it is recorded that Cakrakeśarin, a king of the Keśarī or Somavaṃśī dynasty, erected a temple of eight Caṇḍīs, or *mātṛ-*

---

[8] Pal. *op. cit.,* pp. 25-28. See also K. C. Aryan. *The Little Goddesses* (*Matrkas*) (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 20-30, and D. C. Sircar, *The Śākta Pīṭhas* (Delhi, 1973), pp. 20-24.

[9] See also the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (58.1—80).

kās, and that another Somavaṃśī ruler, Bhīmakeśarin (Bhīmarātha, the successor of Yayāti I), who was a great worshipper of Devī, installed seven sisters (*sata bhauni*) on the eastern side of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara tank at Puri.[10] These sisters most likely refer to the *mātṛkās* which still exist on the eastern side of this tank at Puri which are now enshrined in a modern shed. In that the Somavaṃśī rulers are particularly associated with Puri and Jājpur, it is quite plausible that the temple of eight Caṇḍīs refer to the colossal *mātṛkā* images found by Stirling at Jājpur at the back of a high terrace, popularly known as the *muktimaṇḍapa,* supporting the cenotaph of the Muslim saint Saiyid Bukhārī. Only the images of Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā have survived and they were removed to the compound of the Sub-Divisional Officer in A.D. 1866. According to local tradition the images of Brāhmī, Śivānī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumārī and Nṛsiṃhī were broken down by the Muslims and made into balls and shots for their guns,[11] suggesting there were originally eight and not seven *mātṛkās.* In the ensuing Gaṅga period (A.D. 1110-1435), on the other hand, there are very few surviving examples of *mātṛkā* sets even though this was a period of tremendous artistic activity, especially the first two centuries. Though there are many scattered examples of individual *mātṛkās,* particularly Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā, their *mātṛkā* aspect is not stressed and the collective worship of a group of *mātṛkās* appears to have died out, or at least no new images were created.

---

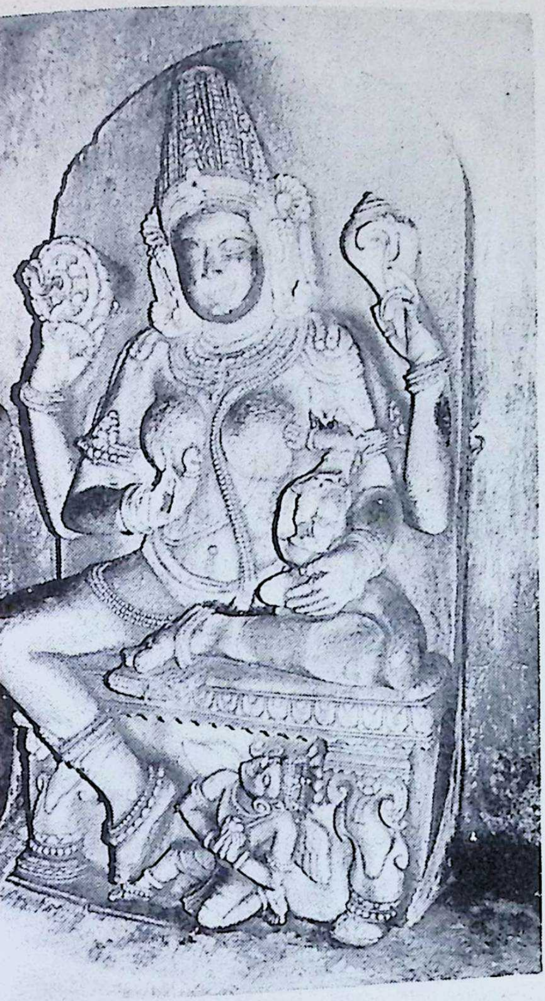
[10] Krishna Chandra Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar* (Calcutta, 1961), p. 249.

[11] Ramaprasad Chanda, "Exploration in Orissa", *MASI* No. 44 (1930)), pp. 2-3.

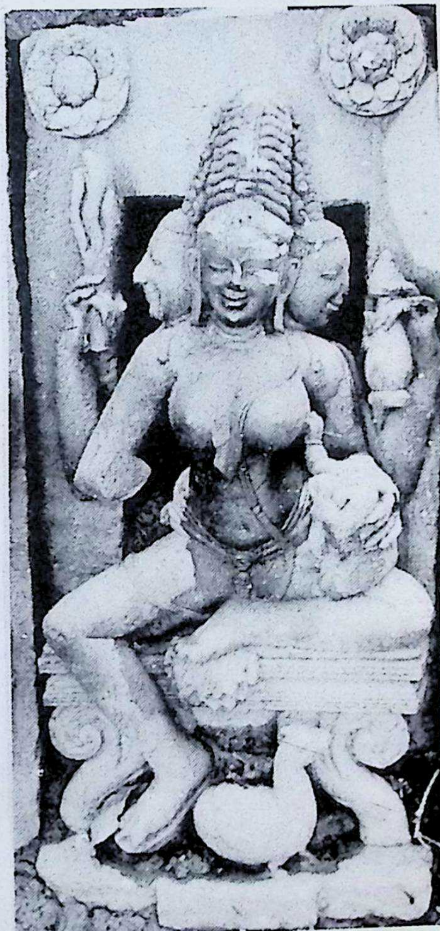
Of the thirty or so sets of *mātṛkās,* or fragments there of, in Orissa, the majority are carved of separate stones and were intended to be housed in a special shrine or to serve as presiding deities within a temple. In only seven cases are they carved on a single slab or escarpment of rock and in only four cases are they associated with a portal or door-frame. In two cases they serve as *āvaraṇa-devatās* in niches of the upper *jāṅgha* of the *deul.* In one example they appear as a continuous series on the north side of the *jagamohana* while in another case they are carved in a lotus-medallion on the ceiling of the *jagamohana.* In all but two cases they are represented in a pacific form despite the emphasis on their blood-thirsty activities and martial prowess on the battlefield in the texts. For the most part, aside from Cāmuṇḍā and Vārāhī, they carry the cognizances and have the mounts of their male counterparts. Cāmuṇḍā invariably chews on one finger and has an emaciated body to stress her devouring aspect. Her cognizances are frequently a *kapāla,* trident or *khaṭvāṅga, kartarī* (knife) and severed head while her vehicle is a corpse or an owl. Vārāhī has a buffalo for her mount and carries a fish and a *kapāla.* In this particular study, however, I will concentrate on only a few iconographic peculiarities of the group as a whole as well as independent images of Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā.

In the earliest set of *mātṛkās,* on the north side of the *jagamohana* of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple dating to the mid-7th century, all seven *mātṛkās* are seated in *padmāsana* or *paryaṅka,* i. e., with legs crossed or one resting on the other, rather than in *lalitāsana* with one leg pendant as standard on most later images. In the sanctum of the Vaitāl Deul, dating to the late 8th century, four of the eight *mātṛkās* are seated in *padmāsana* with legs interlocked while Kaumārī and Śivadūtī are seated in *lalitāsana* with one leg pendant. Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā are seated in *ardhaparyaṅka* with one knee raised. There are thus three different sitting postures for the *mātṛkās*. By the 9th century, as evident at Siṃhanātha and Mukhaliṅgam, all of the *mātṛkās* assume the more relaxing pose of lalitāsana except for Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā who remain seated in *ardhaparyaṅka*. By the end of the 9th century, however, exemplified at Paikapaḍa, even Vārāhī adopts the *lalitāsana* pose. Only Cāmuṇḍā remains seated in *ardhaparyaṅka* with one knee raised and even she abandons this pose by the late 10th century so that all of the *mātṛkās* are seated in *lalitāsana,* though invariably they do not all have the same leg pendant. Exceptions to this general evolution appear at Shergarh and on one set at Rāṇipur-Jhariāl. At Shergarh, Cāmuṇḍā and Vārāhī are in *ardhaparyaṅka,* Brāhmī is in *padmāsana,* and Kaumārī is in *bhadrāsana* (with both legs pendant) riding her peacock-mount. At Rāṇipur-Jhariāl all of the *mātṛkās* are seated in *ardhaparyaṅka* except for Kaumārī (in the middle) who is seated in *paryaṅka.*

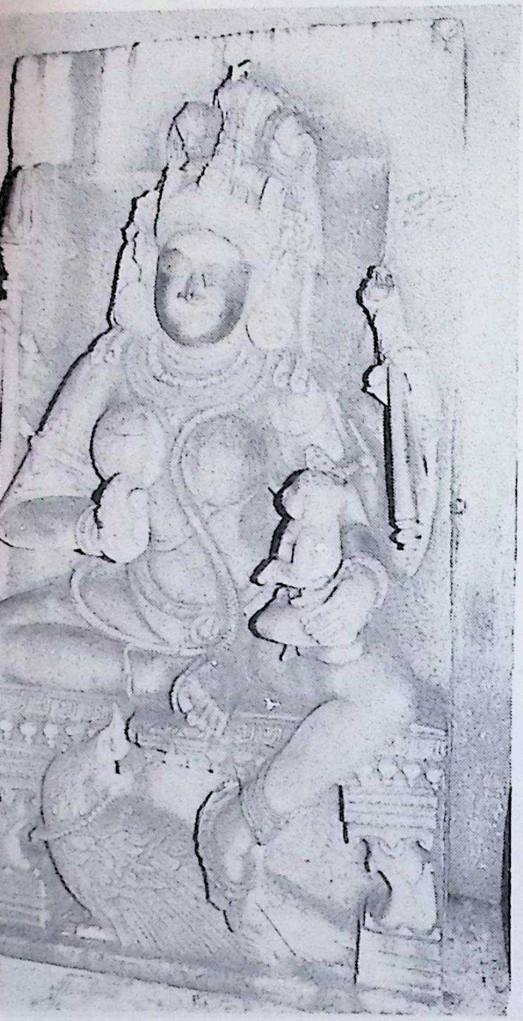
Invariably the *mātṛkās* are accompanied by Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa. In several cases, as on doorframes at Mukhaliṅgam and Siṃhanātha or on the ceiling of the Mukteśvara, where only eight niches or petals were available, either Gaṇeśa or Vīrabhadra is eliminated. In two examples at Rāṇipur-Jhariāl, one on a boulder and the other on an escarpment of rock, the image of Ekapāda Śiva replaces that of Vīrabhadra at the head of the series while at Sathalapura Ekapāda is the presiding deity of a shrine facing the *mātṛkās.* In the earliest example, on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Vīrabhadra is seated in *ardhaparyaṅka* but by the



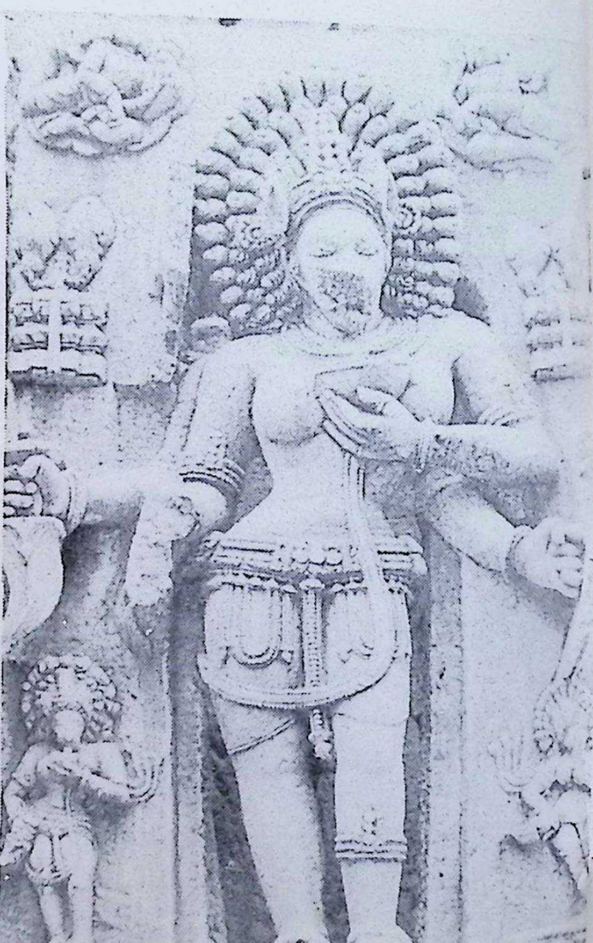
Jajpur : Daśāvatāra ghāṭ, **Vaiṣṇavī**



Sathalapura : **Brāhmi**



Jajpur : Daśāvatāra ghāṭ, **Kaumarī**



Bayalisbati : **Gangeśvarī** Temple

Vārāhī as a pārśvadevatā

8th century he is seated in *lalitāsana*. By the 9th century he is depicted playing the *vīṇā* which becomes his standard cognizance on later images, an exception appearing at Shergarh where, arranged in the middle of the series, he plays the harp. Gaṇeśa likewise is seated in *ardhaparyaṅka* on early sets but by the 10th century he also adopts the *lalitāsana* pose.

From the beginning the *mātṛkās* are four-armed, though Kaumārī and Indrāṇī sometimes have only two, and their *vāhana* is carved beneath their seat. At the end of the 9th century, first noticed at Paikapaḍa, a child is added on the left thigh of each *mātṛkā* except for Cāmuṇḍā. In a few cases, as at Rāṇipur-Jhariāl, Kaumārī is also without a child, possibly to suggest her youthful nature. The child is usually cradled by the major left arm of the *mātṛkā* while her major right hand is invariably held in *abhaya*. The back two hands thus hold the cognizances associated with each goddess.

In the earliest images the coiffure is similar for all *mātṛkās* but by the 10th century each *mātṛkā* has her own peculiar hair-style or crown. In the fragmented set from the Buddhanātha Śiva temple at Garuḍipañcana, dating to the 13th century and thus one of the last examples of *mātṛkās*, the coiffures are particularly elaborate and differentiated. The *mātṛkās* (Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā are now missing) are carved on a long slab and assume an identical pose with the right leg pendant so that the coiffures help to relieve the monotony of standardization.

Being easily moveable or lost, few of the sets are complete or in their original sequence. The most favored alignment of *Saptamātṛkās*, as elsewhere in India, consists of Brāhmī, Śivānī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā. There are deviations, however, as on the Paraśurāmeśvara where Indrāṇī comes before rather than after Vārāhī. At Rāṇipur-Jhariāl, Kaumārī is in the center and the alignment consists of Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Śivāṇī (the Brahmanical trinity), Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā. At Shergarh the alignment is even more varied and consists of Cāmuṇḍā, Vārāhī, Kaumārī, Śivānī, Vīrabhadra, Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Indrāṇī and Gaṇeśa.

The addition of an eighth *mātṛkā,* creating an *Aṣṭamātṛkā* set, suggests a different literary tradition, though the only intact set is the one in the sanctum of the Vaitāl Deul. The eighth *mātṛkā,* placed after the much larger Cāmuṇḍā who is the presiding deity, has been variously identified as Śivadūtī, Kauśikī, or the benevolent ego of the malevolent Cāmuṇḍā. Although there are only seven *mātṛkās* in the present set at Puri,. in the 19th century R. Mitra mentioned an eighth one which he identified as Caṇḍikā, who was like Indrāṇī in appearance and had a bull as her vehicle.[12] In the colossal set at Jājpur, as indicated, local tradition as well as literary tradition suggests there were originally eight, Nṛsiṃhī being the additional *mātṛkā.* In a second set at Jājpur, housed in a modern shrine on the Daśāśvamedha *ghāt,* the presence of Danturā, a gruesome aspect of Cāmuṇḍā, also suggests there were originally eight and not seven. At present there are eight images but the missing Brāhmī has been replaced by an image of Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha, the small image of Lakṣmī appearing like a child on the lap of Nṛsiṃha. M. P. Dash, in his article on the *mātṛkās* at

---

[12] Rajendralala Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa,* Vol. II (Calcutta, 1961 reprint), pp. 231-32.

Sathalapura, describes eight *mātṛkās*, identifying the eighth one as Nṛsiṃhī, though at present only six remain *in situ*.[13] On the Brahmeśvara temple at Beraboi *Aṣṭamātṛkās* are housed in the *kanika* niches of the upper *jāṅgha*. The eighth *mātṛkā*, like Cāmuṇḍā, has no child on her lap. Her right hand, in *varada*, holds an indistinct object while the left hand holds a lotus. What appears to be a lion protrudes from the right side of her head while the left side is obscured by her hand. If not Nṛsiṃhī, she could represent Lakṣmī as the consort of Nṛsiṃha or Vaikuṇṭha. Lakṣmī is frequently associated with the *mātṛkās* as on the doorframes at Mukhaliṅgam and Siṃhanātha where her image, on the lintel, can be conceived as the eighth *mātṛkā*. In the sanctum of the Vaitāl Deul an image of Gaja-Lakṣmī appears above Cāmuṇḍā while at Sathalapura a similar image is the only decoration carved on the sanctum wall, placed immediately above the *mātṛkās*. In textual references, as indicated, either Nṛsiṃhī or Lakṣmī is generally the eighth *mātṛkā* in *Aṣṭamātṛkā* sets.

In addition to these pacific forms of the *mātṛkās*, there are two examples which stress their warrior aspect. The first is a frieze beneath Mahiṣamardinī, the north *pārśva-devatā*, on the Someśvara temple at Mukhaliṅgam where they are engaged in combat with an *asura*, possibly Nirṛita. In the center of the composition the six-armed Cāmuṇḍā is plunging a trident into the body of the demon. She is followed by Kaumārī, Śivānī and Brāhmī while behind the *asura* are Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Indrāṇī. Each *mātṛkā* brandishes a weapon above her head. Their *vāhanas* are placed in shallow niches beneath the frieze. The second and much later group are housed within niches inside the *jagamohana* of the Samlai temple at Sonepur, the temple probably dating to the 18th century. There are eight *mātṛkās* and each wears a garland of skulls. Most are riding on their vehicles. Nṛsiṃhī, replacing Brāhmī, is seated on a lion and blows on a conch. Vārāhī, assuming an *ālīḍha* pose, stuffs a demon into her gaping mouth. Cāmuṇḍā is eight-armed and dances on a corpse who is represented *ūrdhvaliṅga*. The eighth *mātṛkā* is Dakṣiṇa-Kālikā. She is seated in intercourse on the corpse of Śiva. She holds a severed-head and a sword in her left hands while her right hands display *varada* and *abhaya* as prescribed in the texts. The *mātṛkās* are accompanied by Mahiṣamardinī and Hanumān, rather than Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa, which further stresses their war-like nature. Mahiṣamardinī is also carved next to a *Saptamātṛkā* series at Rāṇipur-Jhariāl while on a Mahiṣamardinī image at Kālarahaṅga a pair of *asuras*, possibly Niśumbha and Śumbha, are depicted on the pedestal. At Kuṇḍeśvara, on the other hand, a buffalo-headed *asura* appears on the pedestal of an image of Cāmuṇḍā.

---

[13] M. P. Dash, "Worship of Sapta Mātṛkās and their Representation in Orissan Temples", *OHRJ*, Vol. XI (1962), pp. 120-21.

The images of Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā, as indicated, do not carry cognizances of a male counterpart by which they can be identified and both are singled out for special worship independent of their *mātṛkā* status. Vārāhī, for example, usually holds a fish and a *kapāla* or a bowl, attributes not associated with Varāha who normally carries Vaiṣṇava weapons, and she has a huge pot-belly whereas Varāha has an ideal body. She also has a buffalo for her mount. Her only relationship with Varāha, aside from the *gadā* she may hold in four-armed images, appears to be the fact that both have the head of a boar, though in a late image at Palur she assumes the *ālīḍha* pose, characteristic of Varāha when rescuing the earth, and likewise tramples a serpent while holding another one in one of her hands. For the most part, however, she is a Śākta deity and not a Vaiṣṇava deity associated with a male counterpart. The Tantric nature of her worship is particularly evident on the Vārāhī temple at Caurāsī where erotic images on the *pāgas* of the deul possibly illustrate specific stages of Tantric sexual rituals. It is also on this temple that the *śaktis* of the *dikpālas* are first introduced, though they do not become standard iconographic features on Śaiva temples until some two hundred years later. Although this 10th century temple appears to be the only surviving shrine dedicated to this form of the Devī, sculptural images scattered throughout Orissa, some now established as presiding deities in later shrines, suggest that there may have been numerous other temples which have not survived. That there was originally one at Bhubaneswar is substantiated in a verse demarcating the boundaries of Ekāmra-kṣetra in ancient times, the shrine possibly being destroyed with the construction of the capital at Bhubaneswar.[14] According to J. N. Banerjea there are numerous Vārāhī shrines in the old Kanika state of Orissa and as many as five different forms of the goddess. These forms are described in a *Sanskrit* text, written in Oriya script, in the collection of Sadāśiva Rath Śarmā of Puri, the text being known as the *Vārāhī Tantra*. According to this text the forms are Svapna-Vārāhī, Caṇḍa-Vārāhī, Mahā-Vārāhī (Bhairavī), Kṛcchra-Vārāhī and Matsya-Vārāhī, with the description of the latter corresponding closely to the image enshrined in the temple at Caurāśī.[15] At Sathbhaya, on the shore of the Bay of Bengal in Cuttack district, just south of the Brāhmaṇī river, Vārāhī is worshipped as *pāñca*-Vārāhī. At present, however, there are only four large Vārāhī images and they are all identical in respect to style and iconography,[16] and closely related to the colossal image at Navendrapur, in Balasore district, now broken into three pieces. The latter must have measured nearly ten feet in height (six feet wide) and thus would have been the largest of all Orissan images of Vārāhī. Another image appearing as a presiding deity, in a modern shrine, appears at Banchua in Keonjhar district, just across the river from Anandapur.[17] Other images exist at Tārāpur, in Cuttack district near Jagatsingpur, at Nārāyaṇī, on the Mahānadī next to Kantilo, and at Domagaṇḍarā in Mayurbhañj district.[18] Smaller images, which probably filled niches of exterior walls, appear at Peḍāgaḍi and Ajodhyā while images still *in situ* appear on the Cāṭeśvara temple at Kisenpur and on the Yameśvara temple at Bhubaneswar.

---

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

---

[15] J. N. Banerjea, *Pauranic and Tantric Religion* (Calcutta, 1966), pp. 125-31.

[16] According to local tradition the fifth Vārāhī was very quarrelsome so the other four chased her into the sea. At present a small, badly damaged image, not identifiable, is placed in the shrine with the four Vārāhī images.

[17] Local tradition states the image came from the Pracī valley area as a gift from Puruṣottamadeva to the Rāja of Keonjhar after the Kañci expedition.

[18] See Nagendranath Vasu, *The Archaeological Survey of Mayurabhañja* (Delhi, 1981 reprint), fig. 31.

Iconographically these independent images of Vārāhī have either two or four arms and can be seated in three different poses—*ardhaparyaṅka, lalitāsana* and *bhadrāsana.* In two-armed images the right hand always holds a fish while the left hand holds a *kapāla* or a vessel. With four-armed images the uplifted hands may hold a fish, a *gadā,* a rosary or a noose. Her buffalo-mount is usually carved on the pedestal, except when she is seated in *bhadrāsana,* as in the image at Navendrapur and the four at Satbhaya, where a small figure is seated between her feet.

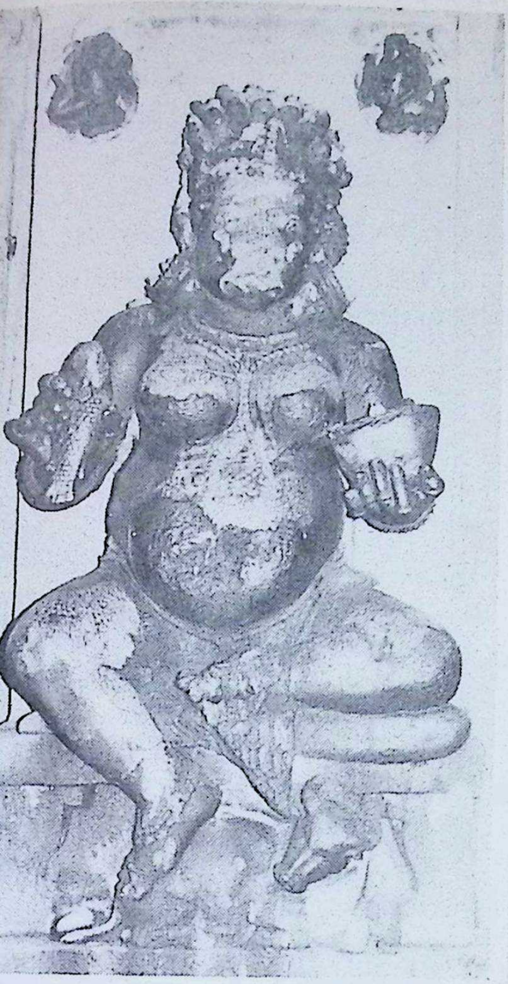
In addition to these images of Vārāhī in a seated pose, there are also examples of her in a standing pose which filled exterior niches of Śākta temples. In two cases, where the images are *in situ,* she functions as a *pārśva-devatā,* on the Gaṅgeśvarī temple at Beyālisbāṭi and on a small shrine within the compound of the Buddhanātha Śiva temple at Garuḍipañcana. In contrast to the pot-bellied seated images, when standing she is depicted with a beautiful body, save for her boar snout. At Garuḍipañcana and Beyālisbāṭi she has four arms and holds a *kartarī,* sword, *kapāla* and shield. Both of these images date to the 13th century. In an earlier but detached image from the Bhīmeśvarī temple at Peḍāgaḍi in Mayurbhañja district, dating to the late 10th or early 11th century, she has eight arms with one of the additional hands placed in *varada* and another holding a rosary. A similar but damaged eight-armed image appears on the Kuṭṭamcaṇḍī temple at debidol in Cuttack district, near Kuṇḍeśvara. In each example she is flanked at the base on either side by a small female attendant.

Even more popular is the image of Cāmuṇḍā. She has many names and her form is more varied than Vārāhī. In the *Agni Purāṇa* (50.21-22, 30-37; 144.30-37), for example, nine forms are enumerated : (1) Rudra-Carcikā ; (2) Rudra-Cāmuṇḍā ; (3) Mahālakṣmī ; (4) Siddha-Cāmuṇḍā ; (5) Siddha-Yogeśvarī ; (6) Rūpa-vidyā ; (7) Kṣamā ; (8) Danturā ; and (9) Kubjikā. According to the texts her abode should be in a funeral ground under a Vaṭa tree and behind her should be the skin of an elephant. In Orissan images the goddess frequently chews on the little finger of her left hand and hence is referred to as Carcikā. In the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (44.41-47) Carcikā was born from the sweat and blood issuing from the forehead of Śiva in his fight against Andhaka : "As you will be smeared with blood, so you will have the auspicious name 'Carcikā'." As an emaciated, devouring goddess of the graveyard, carrying a severed-head and seated or standing on a corpse, Cāmuṇḍā is a gruesome testimony to the revolting practices of Śāktism and Tantrism, such as human sacrifice and the eating of human flesh. At Baḍasāhi, for example, so many humans were sacrificed to her that the site became known as "Bali-muṇḍali".[19] In addition to serving as the presiding deity of a Śākta shrine, or as an *āvaraṇa-devatā* on a Śaiva temple, Cāmuṇḍā was often housed in a special shrine within the temple compound, as in the case of Durgā and Mahiṣamardinī, or she may share a small shrine with Bhairava, often considered to be her male consort, particularly in Tantric worship. The worship of Cāmuṇḍā as a presiding deity was particularly popular during the Bhauma period (A.D. 736-931). In the 17th chapter of the *Svarṇādrimahodaya* it is recorded that four Caṇḍikā images were enshrined on the four sides of the Bindusarovara.[20] Two

---

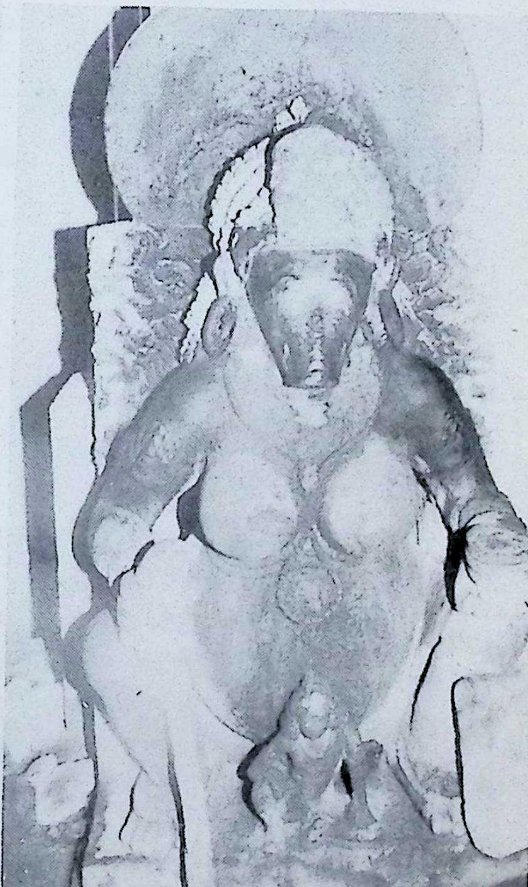
[19] *Ibid.*, p. lxxv.

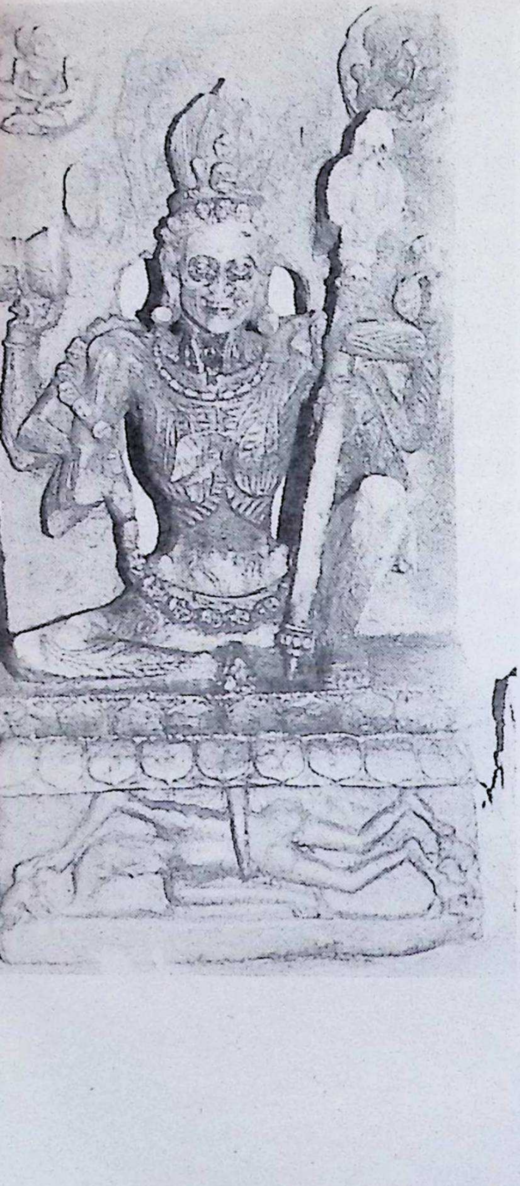
[20] Panigrahi, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-33. The image in the Bhuāśuṇī temple, however, is Mahiṣamardinī and not a Cāmuṇḍā.



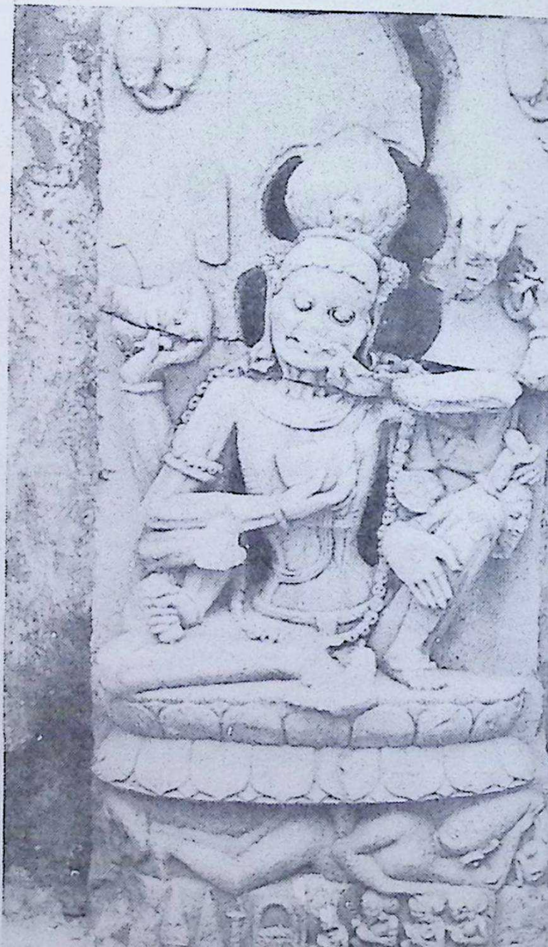
Chaurasi : **Vārāhi** Temple, Main image in Sanctum

Satbhaya : **Vārāhi** No. 4





Kapilash Hill ; **Cāmuṇḍā**



Nathuara :
Kapoteshwar Temple, **Cāmuṇḍā**

of these images are still in their original shrines, one serving as the presiding deity in the Mohinī temple on the south side of the tank and the other in the *jagamohana* of the Uttareśvara temple on the north bank. Two other images of Cāmuṇḍā serve as presiding deities of the Dakṣiṇa and the Kālikā Devī temples at Bhubaneswar. Cāmuṇḍā is also the presiding deity of the Caṇḍī temples at Avana, where she has three heads, and at Kishorpur. The modern Kiñcakeśvarī temple at Khiching has a Cāmuṇḍā as the presiding deity while another was removed to Baripada. The Presiding deity of the Pāśa-Caṇḍī temple at Baḍasāhi, one of the most beautiful images,[21] was also removed to Baripada and is now the property of the Mahārāja. One of the largest and most impressive images must have been the example from the destroyed Bhīmeśvarī temple at Peḍāgaḍi, the image now badly fragmented, while at Benusāgar, near Khiching, only the upper torso and head have survived. Other examples in Mayurbhañja include examples at Bhīmpur and Deogao[22] while at Maṇinageśvara her image is in a shrine at the southwest corner of the compound. In a small shrine on Kapilās Hills her image is placed next to one of Bhairava. At Kuṇḍeśvara she is enshrined in a small thatched-pavilion erected above the ruins of the Jāgulai temple while at Pratāpnagara, near Cuttack, she is in the sanctum of a small modern shrine. Three Cāmuṇḍā images are in the Trilocaneśvara compound at Jājpur with the largest, in a small shrine at the southwest corner, having eighteen arms. Other images at Jājpur appear in the Virajā and Siddheśvara compounds. In the

---

[21] N. Vasu, *op. cit.*, pl. 19, fig. 37.

[22] *Ibid.*, pl. 15, figs. 30 and 30a.

Jāleśvara compound at Kālarahaṅga she is in a shrine at the northwest corner while at Ghorodia she is in a structure on the south side of the compound. Other examples in coastal Cuttack and Puri districts exist at Debidol, Durgāpur, Golobai, Kalamiśtrī, Kurikimuṇḍia, Lendura Bhāgavanpur, Nathuavara and Tīrthamātha. In the Bhagavatī compound at Banpur there are two images while the one from Bañkāḍa has been removed to the Orissa State Museum. In western Orissa probably the largest was the image at Belkhandi, now broken, while at Rāṇipur-Jhariāl she is carved on a huge boulder.

Although her images thus appear throughout Orissa, it is along the Pracī river, an area permeated even today with Tantric worship, that images of Cāmuṇḍā are most numerous, being worshipped under various names such as Carccikā, Jāgulai, Hara-Caṇḍī or Caṇḍī-banti.[23] Such images appear at Amareśvara, Baṭeśvara, Caurāsī, Chahaṭā, Kakatpur, Kapila Muni Āśram, Lataharaṇa, Motia, Niali, Pitapara, Someśvara and Tulasipur.

These independent images of Cāmuṇḍā can be divided into two major groups based on her pose, either seated or standing/dancing, with the seated images being more widespread. In the seated examples she is generally in *ardhaparyaṅka* with one knee raised and a corpse is beneath her. She has a skeletal form, is laughing horribly and wears a garland of skulls as prescribed in the texts. Her number of arms vary from four to eighteen and her weapons change accordingly. She generally cradles a *khaṭvāṅga* or trident in her major left arm with the hand holding a *kapāla* or placing a finger in her mouth, an exception appearing on the three-headed image at Avana where she is seated in *padmāsana* and chews on a finger from her major right hand. When she chews on a finger the *kapāla* is usually held in one of her right hands. One of the right hands always holds a *kartarī* while a severed-head is frequently held by one of the left hands. Other objects in the right hands include a sword, *ḍamarū*, rosary, bell, *paraśu*, *vajra*, or the hand displays *varada*. Objects in the other left hands include a rosary, shield, bell and a serpent or *nāga-pāśa*. The skin of an elephant is stretched behind her head while jackals or vultures gnaw at the corpse beneath her.

---

[23] P. K. Ray, *Prachi Valley* (Bhubaneswar, 1975), p. 32.

There are only a few examples of Cāmuṇḍā in a standing or dancing pose with the one at Paikapada being the only one where she chews on a finger. On the Kartikesvara temple in the Lingaraja compound she serves as a *pārśva-devatā* in the east *rāhā* niche. At Motia there is an example in a small shrine while at Baudh there is a detached image in the Rāmeśvara compound. There are two examples on the Brahmeśvara temple at Bhubaneswar, one six-armed and the other four-armed. The four-armed images usually carry a *khaṭvāṅga*/trident, rosary, *kartarī* and *ḍamarū* and, when sexual characteristics are missing, are difficult to distinguish from Vāmadeva, an emaciated dancing form of Śiva who displays a similar hair-style, as in the example in the Varāha temple at Jājpur or on one of the images on the Brahmeśvara temple. She is also included among the *yoginīs* of the Chauṣaṭ Yoginī pīṭhas at Hirapur and Rāṇipur-Jhariāl and as a *Mahāvidyā* on the Gaṅgeśvarī temple at Beyālisbāṭi.

Other independent images of *mātṛkās* include a rare example of a standing Nṛsiṃhī from Baḍasāhi, now removed to the Baripada Museum, which probably served as a *pārśva-devatā* on the Pāśa-Caṇḍī temple. She is eight-armed and represented in fierce form rather than as a mother. The maternal aspect is stressed, however, in the image of Siṃhavāhinī-Durgā at Chhatrapada, near Navendrapur in Balasore district, worshipped as Paṭṭamaṅgalā. She is four-armed and seated on the back of her lionmount. She holds a flower, sword and shield in three hands while supporting a small standing image of Kārttikeya with her lower left hand. A similar image serves as the presiding image of the Bhadra Kālī temple at Bhadrak.[24] I will close this brief study with an unusual four-armed Indrāṇī image sharing the sanctum of a small shrine (Indrasthāna) with an eight-armed Indra at Āmarāvatī, near Chhatia. What I considered to be unusual, however, turned out to be only another image of Indra which the local people transformed, through plaster and paint, into Indrāṇī, adding a child to her thigh. Thanks to my colleagues in Orissa, who had seen both images before this "transformation", I was able to correct my error and avoid any subsequent embarrassement.

---

[24] H. C. Das, "Religious History of Balasore", *OHRJ*, Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 1-2 (1982), p. 67.

Appendix

SIGN AND ICON

SYMBOLISM IN THE INDIAN FOLK RELIGION

ANNCHARLOTT ESCHMANN

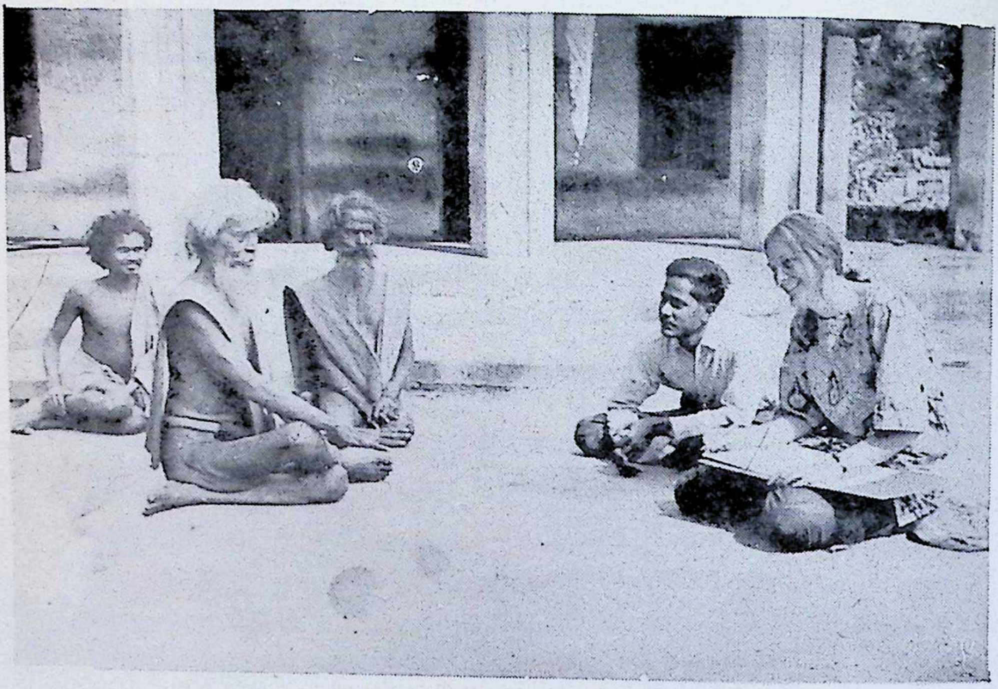
Icon worship is the ritual focus of present day Hinduism, called "later Hinduism" by Indologists. In older Hinduism, the religion of the Vedas, this function was performed by the sacrifice. To this the gods were first invited and then dismissed with great ceremony. The veneration of an idol in a temple—as a permanent, this-worldly manifestation of a deity—began to gain increasingly in meaning and importance and to displace sacrifice more and more only in the post-Buddhist era. Today, animal sacrifice in accordance with Vedic ritual is only seldom performed. Out of all the gods who are worshipped in icons, only Kālī-Durgā, the "terrible" manifestation of the Mother goddess, accepts blood sacrifice.

Every consecrated icon (*mūrti*) is an iconographically exact representation of a specific form of a deity. According to Hindu conception, the god in question embodies himself in his idol almost like a sort of incarnation. This he does in order to provide his devotees with an opportunity for developing direct contact with him, to "see" him (*darśana*).

The god permits himself to be seen in his visual aspect his infinite reality,—a reality which, naturally, can never be fully represented by the icon. This fundamental paradox expresses itself in the cult, in which the deity must be invited and worshipped every single day repeatedly, in order to manifest itself and take its place in the image. The initial ritual consecration of an idol, which takes place only once, is not sufficient.

In every large temple sixteen types of *upacāra,* literally "services", are performed at least twice in a day. Generally, however, they are offered as often as five times a day. This is done before the devotees are admitted into the sanctum for *darśana.* It begins with the "invitation" or "summoning" of the deity, who is "offered a seat" in the icon. Now, only after the icon is endowed with the divine essence, is it further worshipped. During the course of this, it is treated as if it were a king in his court, or a guest whom one welcomes. Pure water is offered to him, his feet are bathed with special water, which the priest drinks. The image is bathed, clothed, invested with the sacred Brahmin thread and embellished with sandalpaste and flowers. Now, incense, a burning lamp and finally something to eat are offered to him. Thereupon, one may also present the god with other things, e. g. money, jewelery, etc. The burning lamp, which had been previously offered, is brought outside to the waiting believers, who are subsequently admitted inside and permitted to circumambulate the icons. During this, the devotees receive some part of the decoration of the icon—flowers and sandalpaste—they drink from the holy water and eat, when possible, from the offering of food, which is called *prasāda,* literally "grace". A real communion between God and man can take place through the

Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann
(1941 - 1977 A.D.)



Miss A. Eschmann in conversation with Vishwanath Baba, the Chief Preceptor of the Mahima sect. To her right is her Research Asstt. Shri Rautrai and with Vishwanath Baba are seen his two desciples.

image, in which the god incarnates himself at every new ritual.

In large temples, periodical performances of the "services" are linked with a daily routine, rather like one which is required to be performed for a powerful ruler : The deity rises in the morning, performs its morning toilette, has its breakfast, receives visitors, has its lunch, retires for its afternoon siesta—the temple is closed during this period—rises once again, etc. until ultimately, may be after an evening entertainment, which delights everyone present with music, readings from holy texts or also dance, a small counterpart of the main idol is actually put into bed. For the night, one does not forget to place some drinking water within reach. In addition to the large, generally immovable main icon—(*mūla bimba* : "original image") (Fig. 1) every temple also possesses a small movable "festive icon" (*utsava mūrti*) which is normally a brass figure. This icon plays an important role during all ritualistic ceremonies. As is apparent from the name, this idol is of greatest importance during festivals because it can leave the temple in a procession. Thousands of pilgrims come flocking to the great centres of pilgrimage during the festivals. These festivals intensify the idea of incarnation of the god, who then manifests himself not only spatially in his icon, but also in a special manner in time.

The execution of the "services" is immensely complicated. *Mantras* (specific Sanskrit holy verses, whose flawless rendering in the appropriate ritual context, is of itself efficacious), prayers and invocations are to be recited, meditation, folding of hands and other gestures, repeated prostration, etc. to be performed. Hence, the practice of these rites is only for Brahmins who are expressly trained for this purpose. Particular Brahmin families are deputed to each temple. In each family the rites peculiar to the temple, or also only a specific portion of these rites, are passed down from father to son. This is because—beyond the sixteen *upacāras,* which are a type of standard pattern—the details of the cult may be very different depending not only upon which god the cult serves, but also upon the place, region, size and importance of the temple.

In India, moreover, since time immemorial there has been a very different realm of religious life in which the worship of icon plays absolutely no or, if at all, only a very ephemeral role : The religions of the tribes, the early inhabitants of India, who, even today, live with their very own social order and religion in large parts of the country. As opposed to Hinduism, Indian tribal religions have almost no anthropomorphic representations of deities which would be relevant to the cult.[1] This is by no means due to an inability to reproduce a true image of persons. On the walls of houses, e. g. one finds artistically painted scenes, commemorative stones and tablets depict the dead heros,[2] and the guardians of the village, who are displayed at the precincts of some villages in eastern India to ward off evil spirits, are often amusing caricatures of Europeans with hats. Practically only elementary symbols or aniconic signs are relevant to the cult : trees, stones, posts decorated in a rudimentary way, and also pots etc. and sometimes literally nothing (Fig. 2). It is not one specifically indicated, defined sign which necessarily represents the divinity, but generally several : one or several stones beneath a tree, stone and post together, etc. Generally, these signs are not chosen arbitrarily. Through a dream or some other vision, the deity itself indicates the place, the stone or also the tree from which a post should be cut.

---

[1] Verrier Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe,* Oxford 1955, pp. 178.

[2] See S. Settar and A. Sontheimer (ed.), *Memorial Stones, Study of their Origin, Significance and Variety,* Dharwar/Delhi, 1982.

The signs are not considered to be icons, i. e. representation of a form of the deities, but nevertheless they represent the presence of the deities. Thus, they are symbols in a very direct sense, i. e. according to Tillich, signs, which directly partake of the paramount reality which they depict. Thus, it corresponds to this symbolic character, that the signs are not the focus of the ritual which takes place in front of them, rather than upon them. There is no daily rite worth mentioning. The cult basically consists of sacrifices which are performed at particular times : often at great intervals or in emergency situations, like drought, sickness, etc.

In addition to smaller offerings of food and drink, blood sacrifices are the most important. Even as late as the beginning of the previous century, human sacrifice was customary in some East Indian tribes. Basically, due to the clever action of two English officers[3] this was then substituted by buffalo sacrifice. The sacrifice satisfies and conciliates the deities and enables a sort of communion with them : first of all, the sacrificial animal itself is often consumed, its meat is later served at a general feast. During the sacrifice the signs represent the deities in so far as they symbolically accept and take the sacrifice. The blood of the sacrificial animal is poured over them, its head is buried in front of them, etc. However, they do not or only to a small extent, convey a divine presence. On the contrary, this occurs through a human medium. A person is possessed by the deity, which manifests itself in that it speaks through him. Frequently this occurs on the occasion of a sacrifice but it may also happen at other occasions, or even quite unexpectedly and it can be more or less strongly institutionalized according to shamanistic practices. In our context it is decisive that the function of the icon in later Hinduism—namely, to mediate the real presence of the divinity with which the devotee can communicate—in the tribal religions is taken over to a large extent by a person who is the shamanistic medium.

---

[3] See *History of the Rise and Progress of the Operations for the Suppression of Human Sacrifice and Infanticide in the Hill Tracts of Orissa,* Calcutta, 1854 and W. McPherson : *Memorials of Service in India,* London, 1865.

One is justified in asking, whether or not it is permissible to simply compare natural religions with a high religion like Hinduism. In reality, this comparison is constantly taking place because both these religions, particularly the different types of rituals, with regard to icon and sign, meet perpetually and lead afresh to new combinations.

To a large extent the history of Hinduism consists of its encounter with tribal religions and their continuous integration. "Sanskritization" is the name given to this process of "partial acceptance of communities, which upto now had been outside the folds, into the religio-social community of the Hindus, whose system is based on Sanskrit texts."[4] This process has been named "Sanskritization" since it generally leads to the adoption of Sanskrit as a sacred language. This expression, has been criticised because it is limited to a language which is not necessarily always involved in this integration process. I would like to use the term "Hinduization."[5]

The process of Hinduization is basically made possible due to three characteristics of Hinduism; the fundamental doctrine that all divine powers are manifestations of the One, the lack of a binding doctrinal authority and the open caste hierarchy. This not only enables new gods to be accepted into Hinduism and to be identified with the gods already present; but also the continuous creation of new castes, or rather the recognition as castes of tribal groups which have been Hinduized only very superficially.

Thus, the process of Hinduization is basically effected in two directions. On the one hand, gods of tribal religions, with their symbols and cult, are accepted in Hinduism, i.e., in some way or another, affiliated to or even incorporated into the temple cult. On the other hand, tribal cults take up Hindu elements—names of gods, rites, conceptions—and through this, ephemeral though this assimilation may be, are "reputable" for Hinduism. The area in which the process of Hinduization principally occurs is folk religion. This is the religion of a Hindu village which geographically, as well as in a more abstract sense, lies between tribal religions and Hindu temple cults.

---

[4] Jan Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens,* Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1963, pp. 11.

[5] See A. Eschmann, "Hinduisation of Tribal Deities in Orissa", in A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, G. C. Tripathi (ed.), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa,* New Delhi: Manohar, 1978.

In Sociology related to India, this local focus is often called the "Little Tradition" in contrast to the Sanskritic "Great Tradition". This contrasting pairing of opposites has proved itself as being too abstract. In reality, the doctrines of basic Sanskrit texts do not necessarily clash with local customs. The importance of a mediating zone, which lies between these two, has only recently been recognised: the regional tradition. This tradition works like a transmission belt between the all-Indian Great Tradition and the local practice, but not in the sense of a provincial deformation. Regional tradition is a legitimate, independent component of the Great Tradition. It is recognised by great Sanskrit texts as being the "law of the land" (*deśācāra*).

Folk religion, which shall be discussed here, has its centre in the village. In fact, not only historically, but also typologically it reaches—to stay within the framework of the field of tension described above,—on the one hand, deep into tribal religions and on the other hand, deep into the regional, and with this into the Great Tradition. Historically, because often one can clearly follow various steps of the Hinduization process. and, through that, also, the development from sign to icon, and the combination with one another of originally alien cult forms. Typologically because this combination of cult elements, the manifestation of gods through signs and icons further occurs simultaneously, and also there, where the influence of tribal religion has not exercised itself for a long time. So one finds, e. g. a shrine in every Indian village with an aniconic sign, or rather an elementary symbol—generally a stone beneath a tree or in a grove—for the village goddess. Her cult has the same structure as that of the cult in tribal religions. Generally, daily rituals are not performed, blood sacrifices are made after long intervals, the goddess appears through a human medium. the priests are non-Brahmins and generally belong to lower castes.

Often one can identify such a village goddess as a former tribal deity through details of her cult, her name, and above all, by the castes or groups to which her priests belong. But it is not necessary that this must always be so. The constant of Indian folk religion is the recurring possibility of epiphanies of the gods through aniconic signs and elementary symbols. Such epiphanies have been reported since a very long time. Reliefs from Buddhist times depict trees from which a deity speaks, in the boughs of which human entrails have been hung as sacrificial offerings. And they have also established themselves in ritualistic forms in the high religion where particular trees, plants, and stones are worshipped like icons.

Here it is not intended to speak so much of the constantly recurring appearance of worship of elementary symbols, but more of the development from sign to symbol and vice versa. This development will be depicted by some examples. They are all related to one region,—the East-Indian province Orissa[6]—and mostly to one and the same deity. Her Sanskrit name is "Lady of the Post" *Stambheśvarī* (Oriya: *Khambeśvarī*). Hinduised forms of worshipping her have been known since the 8th century A.D. In fact, even today she is worshipped under different names by several tribes–especially the Khond–and also at different levels of folk religion. As is apparent from the name, her sign is a post which, when necessary,–wood rots away–is replaced during a complicated rite.

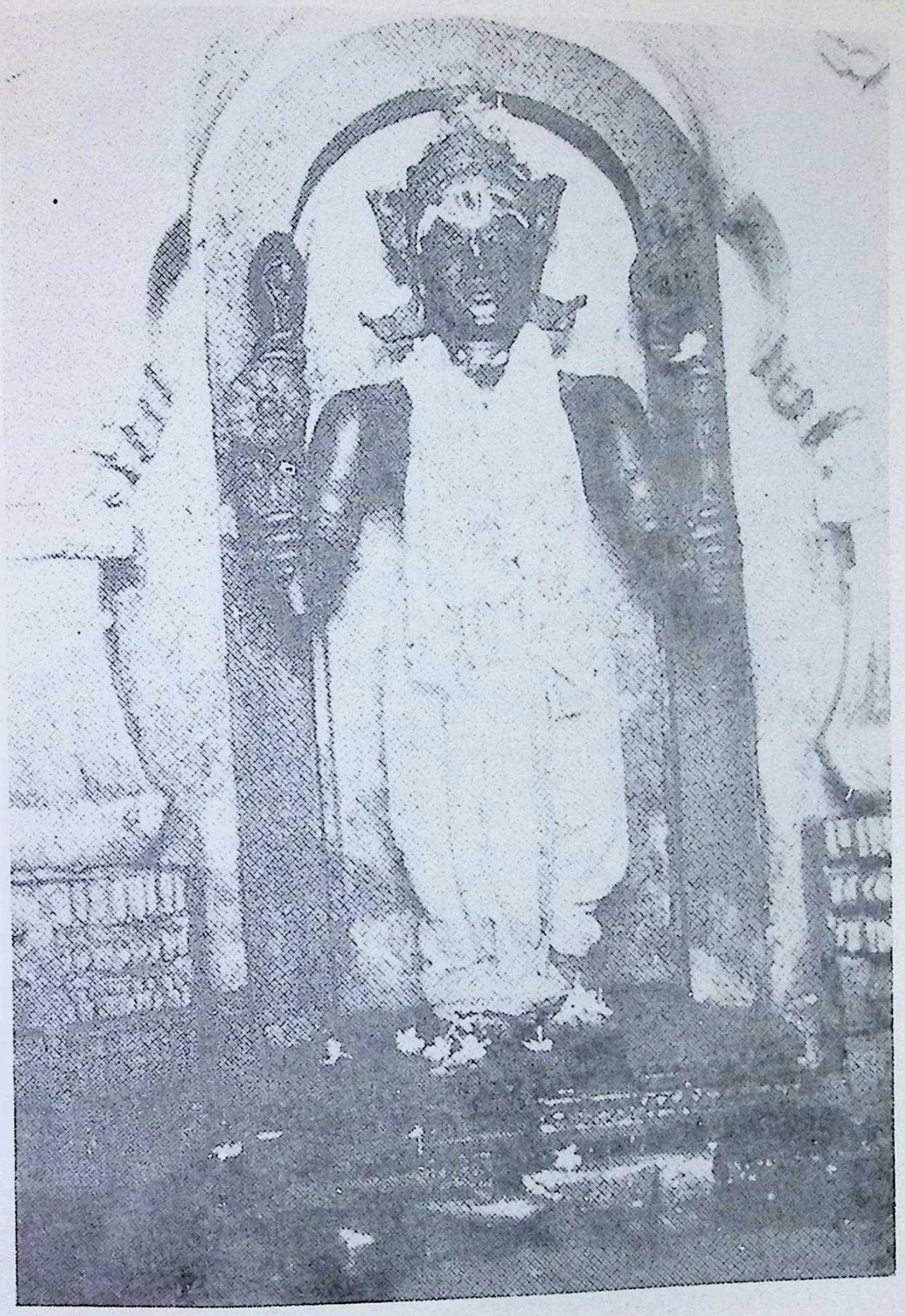
---

[6] This paper is a result of my work in the Orissa Research Project which made it possible for me to do field work twice for a total period of one and a half years. The interdisciplinary Orissa Research Project was conducted from 1970 to 1975 within the framework of the South Asia Research Scheme (SFB 16) of the University of Heidelberg in collaboration with Indian scholars.

The first step towards Hinduization is taking place during this ceremony which is performed only rarely. In some Khond villages a Brahmin is brought from a considerable distance on the last day of this festival. Just before it is displayed, the Brahmin whispers the "life-giving" *mantra* to the cut and ready post. With this he performs the act which constitutes the first consecretion of a Hindu icon: the "breathing in of life" by the whispering of a *mantra.* Naturally, there are no particular rules in the ritual handbooks for the consecration of a tribal deity. Thus, the Brahmin proceeds in accordance with the rules which apply for the Goddess *Vana Durgā* ("Forest Durgā") which seem to have been especially created for such cases.

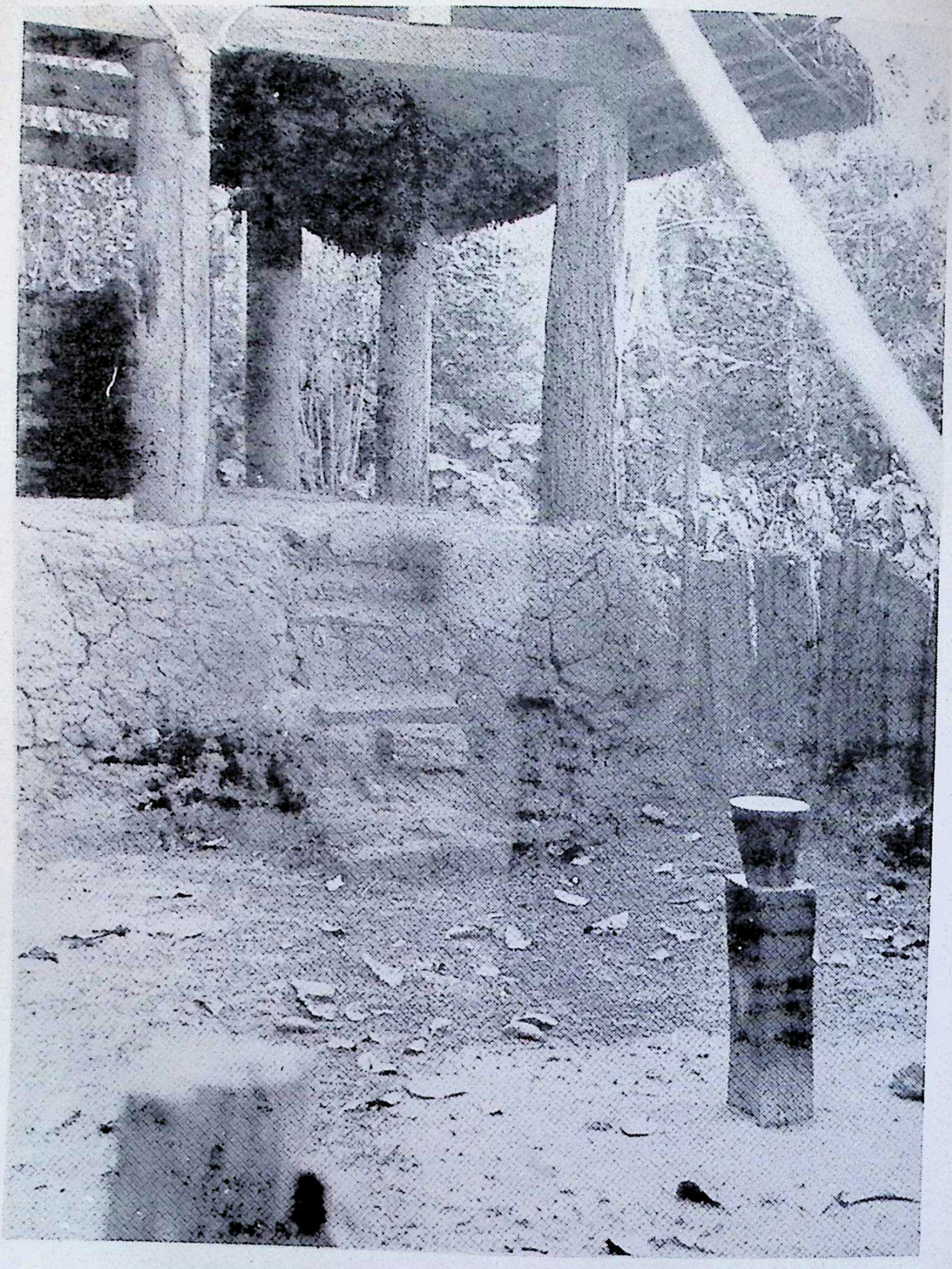
With this single and rather ephemeric act–generally the Brahmin is hardly paid heed to and sits somewhat lost at the edge of the gathering–the aniconic sign has theoretically become a Hindu idol of a god. But this is an event which does not have any further consequence in the purely Khond villages described.

The next step in the development from sign to icon consists of the further acceptence of ritual elements from Hindu icon worship. This generally occurs if the tribal groups live even closer together with caste Hindus. In



No. 1.

The main cult image in a Viṣṇu Temple
(Kapilas, Orissa).



No. 2.

Shrine of a tribal goddess : the shrine is empty but there stands a post as a symbol of the divinely presence.

such an area e. g. a stone as a sign of Khambeśvarī is worshipped by both groups together. This stone is in a grove belonging to the inhabitants of a Hindu village and a neighbouring tribal settlement. Strangely enough, the sign of the Goddess Khambeśvarī in Hinduised folk cultures is rarely a post but often a stone. This is probably explainable by the fact that the complicated rite, which is necessary for renewing the post, cannot be conducted at this level of Hinduization. Since usually in addition to the post, one or several stones are also worshipped, the worship is probably transferred to a stone when the post has finally rotted.

In our example the priest is a Khond. The sacrifice which normally takes place only once in a year is offered by him, and it is also through him that the goddess speaks. Here a Brahmin is only called in for a function, which is typical for this enlargement of an originally tribal cult,—namely to cook. The Khond priest cooks only that portion of the meat which has been chosen for the Goddess. The rest is prepared by the Brahmins and, consequently, can be consumed by all present—i.e. by people belonging to different castes.

Once in a month and also before the sacrifice the Khond priest bathes and anoints the stone of the goddess, brings to it incense, a lamp, flowers, rice and sweetmeats, i.e. he performs the simplest and most important of the above mentioned "services" by which a Hindu icon is worshipped. With this the sign has become an icon. That it is also considered as being such, is shown by the verses which the Khond priest speaks. Naturally, these verses are neither in Sanskrit, nor do they contain Sanskrit lines which are often found in folk cults, but are composed in a somewhat antiquated form of the regional language, Oriya: "Your body glistens with ointment. It is radiant..... Once more I will anoint it...... O Mother Durgā, I pray to your feet........ O Goddess, please come and seat yourself here, I want to offer you food...... Take the sweet scented flowers, take the garlands and keep them around your neck. O Mother Khambeśvarī, please come to this area. I give you my salutations...... Take milk and rice. I offer it to you out of piousness...... O Mother Khambeśvarī, I beg and beseech, be joyful and happy."[7]

These simple verses clearly show the transition from a more general summoning of the goddess to accept the sacrifice, to the concept of requesting the goddess to descend into an icon and to worship this as her body. This is not unlikely in the tribal religion and *mutatis mutandis* also conforms to the Vedic cult. Likewise, the identification of the Goddess Khambeśvarī with Durgā becomes clear.

The next step in the development from sign to icon would then be the daily performance of the five basic *upacāras* on an outwardly unchanged sign. Because the most often possible performance of the "services", which guarantee the real presence of the deity in her icon, is after all the sign of highest perfection of the icon cult. So e. g. in a large Hindu village the sign of Khambeśvarī—likewise a stone—is worshipped as an icon through the daily performance of the five simplest and most basic "services". At noon every day sandalpaste, flowers, a lamp, incense and something to eat, mostly milk, are offered. The verses spoken at this time contain Sanskrit components. Above all, the *mantra* of the Goddess is recited. The icon character of the sign is emphasised in a particularly moving manner by a small termite infested umbrella. This umbrella stands behind the small stone of the goddess and is often considered as being the main thing. This is a modest imitation of a royal state umbrella which the large icons of gods are entitled to have and which accompanies them in a procession. Here the character of a "proper" temple layout is further underlined by the fact that everyday another deity as "Protector of the door" (*dvārapāla*) is also worshipped as in large temples. This deity stands outside the mud hut in which Khambeśvarī has her place and is similarly represented by an unhewn stone (Fig. 3).

---

[7] The text of this verse was very kindly placed at my disposal by the priest in office, Bira Dehuri Khonda. Normally such verses were passed down only verbally, but in this case the grandfather of the present priest had written it down.

The typologically rather different cult, which is primarily connected with the worship of signs, still functions despite its principle adoption of a rite connected with icon worship. The priests of such shrines continue to be non-Brahmins. In the present example the priests belong to the caste of *Mālī* (gardner), who very often officiate as priests in folk religion. Sacrifice is still a decisive constituent of the cult and is offered at least once a year—now, however, mostly in October at the festival of Durgāpūjā where also in high Hinduism blood sacrifices take place for the Goddess Durgā. Even at these occasions the Goddess appears through a human medium rather like in the elementary forms of the cult of Khambeśvarī. One could say that at this level of development from sign to icon the epiphany of the deity occurs through two media : in the sign which is worshipped like an icon and in the person whom the deity possesses.

The fact that both media, pictograph and person, have the very same function is clearly demonstrated by a somewhat more important shrine not far from the one just described. Of the possible procedures which lead to achieving the trance—it often also occurs rather spontaneously—here the deity is guided or forced into her medium by the fact that one treats this person as though he were an icon. After he has fasted, bathed and put on clean garments the same "services" are performed on him, which earlier on the same day had been dedicated to the "sign" (Fig. 3): he is anointed, garlanded, covered with honey and milk etc. It is extraordinarily impressive to see how, during this procedure, he slowly goes into a trance, begins to tremble, until he finally springs up and the goddess speaks through him (Fig. 4).

The physical proximity of icons and signs and their respective cult forms is typical of folk religion, i. e. of that area which lies in the above described tension between the tribal religions and the regional stamp of the Great Tradition. Here symbols are treated like icons without being outwardly changed. The equilibrium of both cult forms shifts in the same measure in which the cult of a goddess, so to speak advances to the side of high Hinduism. The service on the idol becomes consecutively more elaborate, the appearing of a deity through a human medium recedes and also sacrifice is restricted significantly.

The further development of such a cult in the area of high Hinduism is generally initiated by the fact that a king or petty prince ensures for himself the support of the powerful local deity and draws her cult into that of the court.[8]

---

[8] For the connection between kingship and temple cults in Orissa vide H. Kulke, *Jagannatha Kult und Gajapati Königtum.*

Through this, necessarily, follows a reinforcement of high-Hinduistic elements ; a larger temple is constructed, Brahmins are drawn in, who now constantly work together with the original non-Brahmin priests (Fig. 5).

It then appears as insufficient to treat only the aniconic sign as an icon. It is either supplemented by a proper icon or is itself changed to a sort of anthropomorphic icon. In the first instance the signs are changed into, so to speak, attributive symbols of Hindu deities. In some temples the post is changed into a festive idol of the deity which is portrayed by a large icon. A transportable post, generally clad in saris, or a pole is also kept in the temple and in processions takes over the main role in place of the otherwise customary brass figure (Fig. 6). Often the original signs are still connected with the sacrifice, which is tolerated within the temples only in a limited way. Thus, stone or post often stand in front of the temple and, as representatives, accept the sacrifice. The ambivalence between sign and icon, which is typical of folk religion, continues all the time. This is beautifully demonstrated where the insignificant stone in front of the temple on which the sacrifice is made, is termed as the sister of the goddess which is in the temple. Like those belonging to the higher castes this goddess is a vegetarian and so does not accept any blood sacrifices.

Also in "higher" forms of Hinduism the absorption of elementary symbols and aniconic signs is not difficult. This is due to the fact that here similar signs and symbols already

---

Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation mittelalterlicher Herrscher in Indien, Wiesbaden, 1979.

exist, which have been firmly established in the cult even if they originally stem from the area of tribal and folk religion as probably they most certainly do. Probably the best known is the *tulsi*-plant, sacred to Viṣṇu, which is worshipped daily in every house. To be mentioned in this context is the sacrificial-post (*yūpa*), which is the centre of the Vedic sacrifice. He *is* Viṣṇu and is considered to be an anthropomorphic being. An obvious association is also drawn with the post which stands in front of the temples of one-time tribal deities, and also accepts the sacrifice and is worshipped everyday when the "services" are performed.

A movable post as idol has been known since Vedic times. At the festival of Indradhvaja a post is erected for Indra and is worshipped. It is probably no coincidence that this festival which had long been considered extinct, still continues to be celebrated exactly there in Orissa, as G. C. Tripathi recently discovered.[9]

Simple stones as attributive symbols of a god otherwise represented by an icon are also common to high Hinduism. Some of the most common and important symbols of Viṣṇu are the black Śālagrāma stones, which come from a particular region in the Himalayas.

The different variations of the second possibility, namely that the original signs themselves are converted into icons can here only be enumerated in short. Occasionally a stone is given a new interpretation as being a particular type of a Śiva icon—a *svayaṃbhū liṅga,* "self-emerged liṅga". With this actually no border-line between sign and icon is transgressed. This is because the liṅga which is worshipped in most Śiva temples as the main cult icon, is itself a symbol which was probably adopted from archaic cults. As is often emphasised, a liṅga is a "conventional" depiction made of stone or bronze. Because God has designated them to be cult objects, the *svayaṃbhū liṅgas,* in contrast, are unhewn stones or bits of rock found at the place, "self-emerged".

---

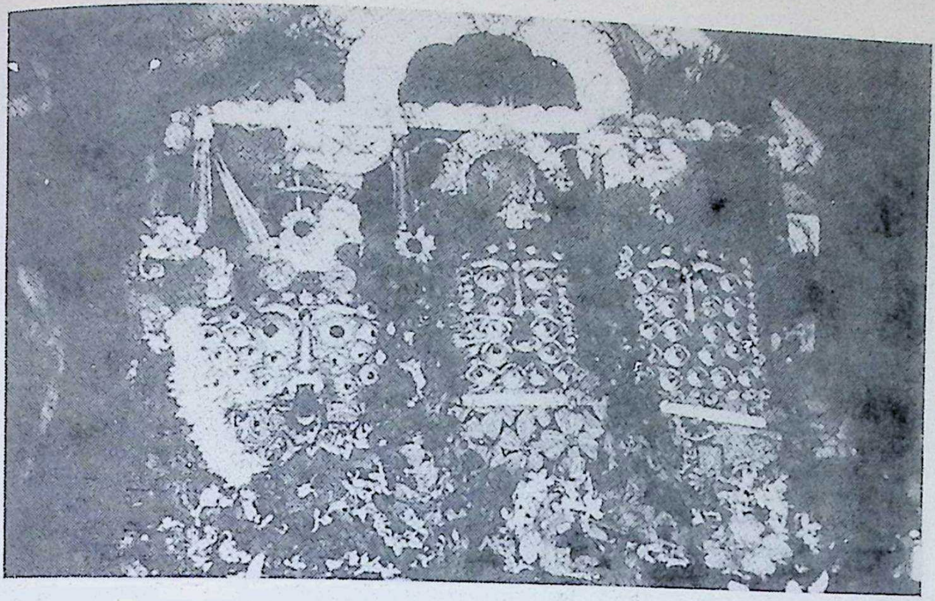
[9] G. C. Tripathi: "Das Indradhvaja-Fest in Orissa. Die Überreste der Indra-Verehrung in Ostindien." Lecture held on the occasion of the German Orientalists Conference 1975 in Freiburg; published in ZDMG, Supplement III.2, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 1002–14.

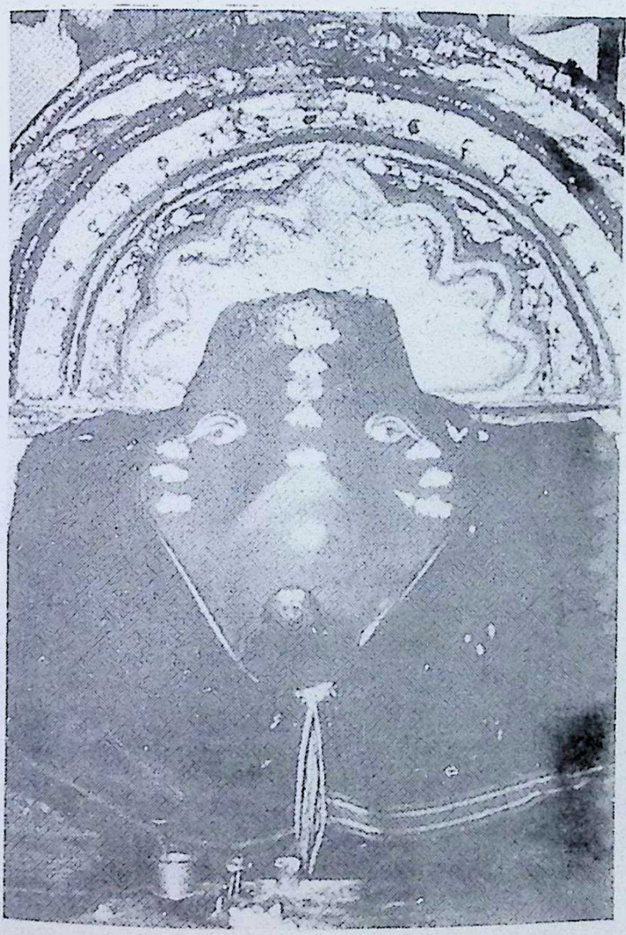
Naturally this conception can be easily transferred to stones already present and being worshipped, and probably results from the necessity of Hinduising such signs. The fact that the sign which originally generally represented a female deity has become the cult icon of a male god is not as surprising as it would seem at first. A liṅga is never depicted without a similarly standardised representation of its female counterpart, i. e. this cult icon actually depicts god *and* goddess. However, this goddess, wife of Śiva, in her formidable aspect is Durgā, with whom the originally tribal goddesses are generally identified. So in many temples (those which house the *svayaṃbhū liṅga*) there is also a temple for one of the formidable forms of the consort of Śiva to whom sacrifice is also made. A rather recent example of such a transformation is a Śiva temple constructed in 1969 in which a *svayaṃbhū liṅga* is worshipped. The Goddess, represented only by a very primitive icon—a head mask of papier-maché—is now worshipped in a clay hut near the temple. Here sacrifices are also made. However, the priest positively remembers that before the temple was constructed Śiva and the Goddess were worshipped together at one place.

The manner in which the transition from the original sign to the conception of the *svayaṃbhū liṅga* can probably occur is demonstrated at a shrine, where a piece of rock is enclosed in cement so that it looks exactly like a *svayaṃbhū liṅga*. The priest still does not yet designate it as one, and says that the covering serves aesthetic purposes. However, since everyone at first sight takes this rock as being a *svayaṃbhū liṅga* one can probably expect that it will be conceived as being so.

However, the identification with a *svayaṃbhū liṅga* is not the only possibility for an original sign to become a main cult icon itself. The sign can be reshaped to such an extent that it at least has a face, i. e. it meets so to speak the minimal requirements of an anthropomorphic icon. This occurs through the application of metallic eyes, mouth and nose to the stone. The "bestowal of eyes", which are generally of silver, is a votive gift made very often in the country. Thus, one finds stones which are completely covered with eyes. A head with the tongue hanging out represents, like e. g. in the above described Śiva-temple, very often one of the "terrible" goddesses. It is possible that here the association with the severed head of a sacrifice plays a part.

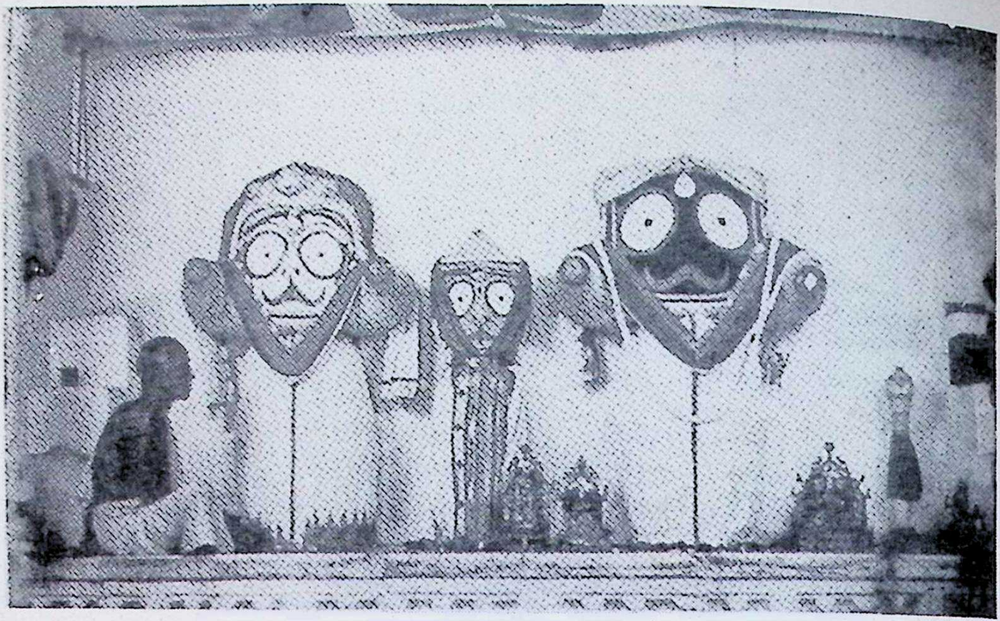
Many important and powerful temples in Orissa have main icons which virtually consist only of the face which had been applied to the original stone. In this case, the goddesses generally retain their original names and are only loosely identified with Durgā. Interestingly enough, however, all other icons of these goddesses—the "festive icons" and also any other representation of her at other places—are iconographically correct anthropomorphic statues. Only in the case of the Goddess Samalāī in Sambalpur has a particular form of the original sign, a piece of rock with a trunk-



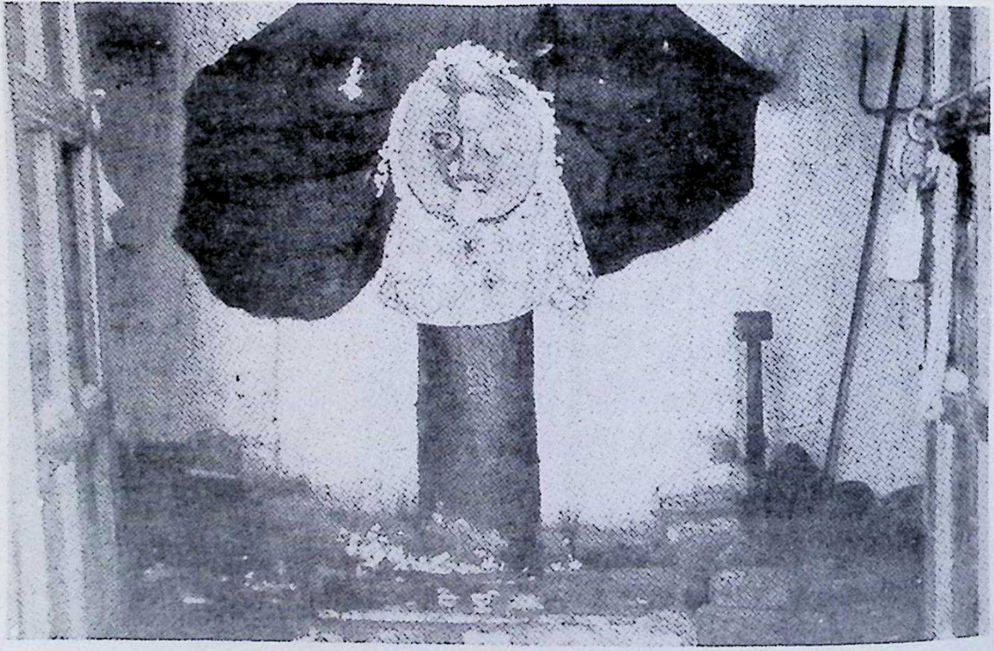


No. 7.
Three unhewn stones serving as cult images in the temple of **Tārā Tāriṇī** (South Orissa). The eyes are votive gifts.

No. 8.
The image of the goddess Samalai in her temple at Baragarh (West Orissa). Note that the original features of the goddess in Sambhalpur are exactly reproduced.



No. 9. The wooden deities Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Jagannātha along with their portable metallic representations or 'festive images'.



No. 10. Image of the goddess **Khambheśvarī** in her temple at Askā (South Orissa). The original symbol, a post or a pillar, has now received a face.

like bulge, lead to the marking of an iconographic type of its own which has also been reproduced at other places (Fig. 8).

A post becomes a main cult icon even more rarely than a stone. However, this is also possible, as is shown by the very impressive example of the Khambeśvarī temple in Aska; a post, on which a face, so to speak, a plate with eyes, nose, mouth and tongue has been put on (Fig. 10). Particularly when it is clothed, the figure looks almost like a "proper" cult icon—the original sign form, a simple wooden post, still stands in front of the door. This temple is very significant, Hindus of all castes visit it and also partake of the food which has been offered to the goddess. They eat the food despite the fact that the priest, who had prepared it, is not a Brahmin. His family is not only conscious, but also proud of its tribal origin, which also plays a big role in the legend of the temple.

In all the examples given thus far Hinduization led in an absolutely logical manner into the area of Śāktism and Śaivism. Only for the sake of completeness it is noted, that one can also find Viṣṇuised Hinduization at most differing levels. In these cases, usually one of the ten *avatāras* (incarnations) of Viṣṇu is involved which is "horrible", like the "man-lion" who dismembers a demon. The relation to a female deity results from the fact, that precisely these shapes also have a feminine aspect in the tantric conception, which has a great influence in Orissa.

Generally one can say, that the icon—which was introduced as an addition at a more intensive level of Hinduization or resulted from the original sign—now fully takes over the function of a Hinduistic icon and generally conveys the presence of the deity exclusively. Normally there are no human media any more in such temples. Probably, however, the sacrifice still remains, even if it is in a form which is somewhat reduced and separated from the present main cult.

Only very seldom does the process of transition from sign to icon develop further until it reaches into a temple of inter-regional importance and with this right into the "Great Tradition". This has occured in the huge Jagannātha temple in Orissa, one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in India, which every Hindu should have visited before his death. Here, Viṣṇu as Jagannātha, the "Lord of the World", his sister Subhadrā and his older brother Balabhadra are worshipped. Their icons are awkward, roughly painted wooden figures, which basically consist only of trunk and head (Fig. 9). The figure of Subhadrā is clearly related to that of Khambeśvarī in Aska and certainly goes back to this type of the Hinduised Goddess of the post. Similarly, the figure of Jagannātha is the product of a Hinduization process. This process probably began with the identification of a tribal "deity of a post" with Viṣṇu's incarnation as "man-lion", the latter was often connected with other forms of Viṣṇu and was combined with the type of the Hinduistic "Khambeśvarī". In contrast to this it appears that the third figure, that of the older brother, is not the result of a Hinduization process, but appears as having been added later. The whole process which had led to the development of these icons and their present identity,[10] cannot be described here in detail, and it also reaches far out of the area of folk religion.

---

[10] See A. Eschmann, "The Vaiṣṇava Typology of Hinduization and the Origin of Jagannātha"; and A. Eschmann, H. Kulke,

One should, however, mention that even in this temple, which is naturally Brahmanic and Sanskritic through and through, there are still elements of the original tribal cult, even if they are no longer connected with blood sacrifice. Also here, next to the Brahmin priests there is an absolutely different class of priests, i. e. the *daitas,* who are considered as being "relatives" of the God Jagannātha. They explicitly denote themselves as belonging to a tribe, descendents of a particular tribe, who, according to the temple legend, worshipped this god originally in the forests. And these priests play the main role at one ritual, which still permits itself to be clearly traced back to its non-Hinduistic tribal origin: the periodic renewal of the wooden figures. To an amazing extent this conforms to the above mentioned tribal ritual of replacing the Khambeśvarī post. Such a ritual is unique in high Hinduism which hardly ever knows cult idols made of wood.[11]

Hinduization of a tribal cult to the greatest extent possible is reached in the Jagannātha temple in Puri. This temple is located at the logical end of the regional tradition

---

G. C. Tripathi : "The Formation of the Jagannātha Triad", in : Eschmann, Kulke, Tripathi (ed.), op. cit.

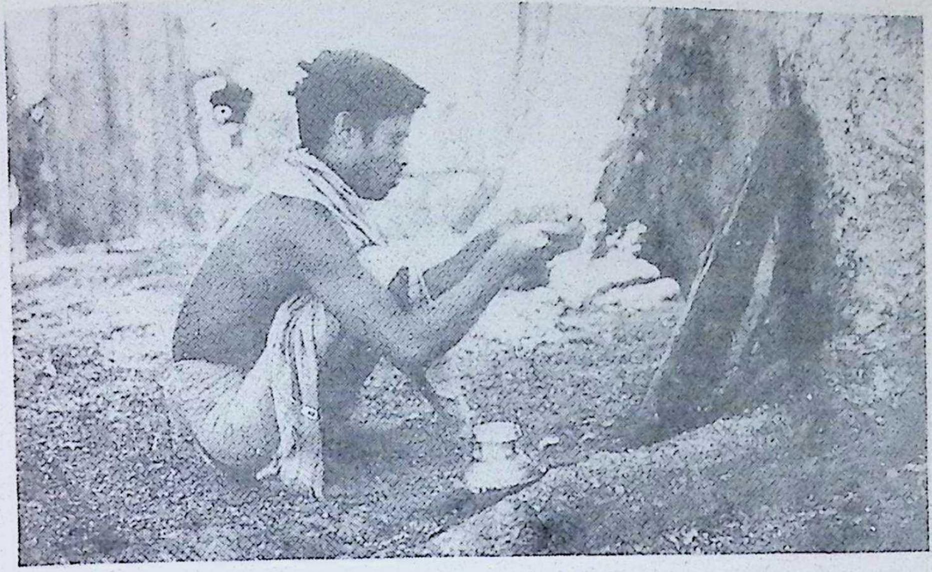
11. Compare G. C. Tripathi : Das "Navakalevara" Ritual im Jagannātha-Tempel von Puri, in : *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft,* Supplement II (XVIII German Orientalists Conference, 1972), Wiesbaden 1974, pp. 410-418 ; and "Navakalevara—the Unique Ceremony of the 'birth' and 'death' of the 'Lord of the world', in : Eschmann, Kulke, Tripathi (ed.), op. cit. [pp. 223-264] and also A. Eschmann, "Prototypes of the Navakalevara Ritual and their Relation to the Jagannātha Cult, ibid. [pp. 265-284].

and already halfway within the Great Tradition, which is normative for all the Hindus of India. The price of an extensive ascent of this nature appears to be, that the original personality of the deities was given up and completely substituted by those of the Great Tradition.

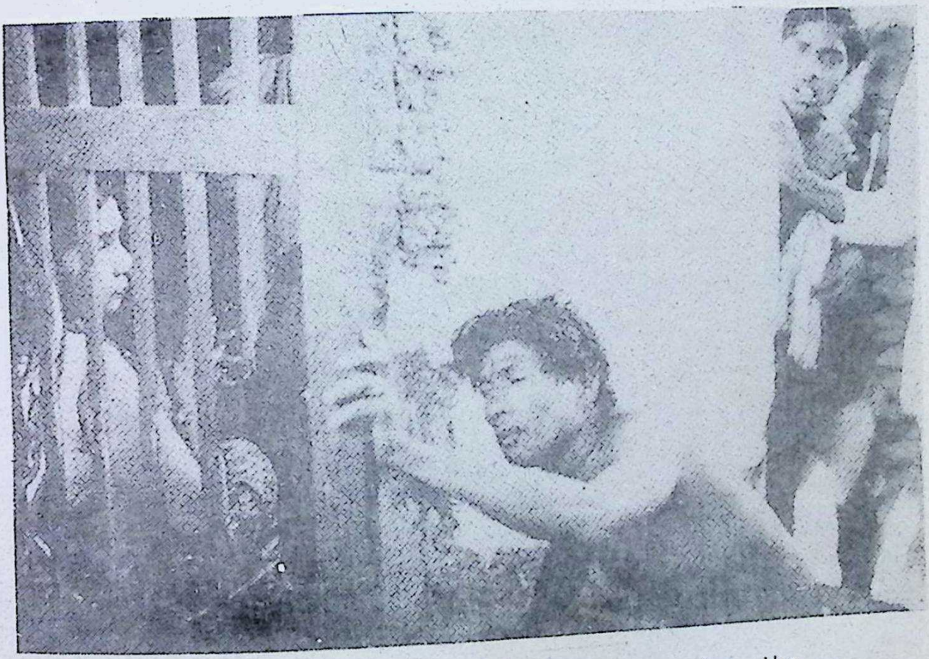
As noted at the outset, the process of Hinduization can also be so to speak retrogressive, icons become signs. It often occurs that iconographically exact representations of specific gods—generally sculptures from old temples—are worshipped as symbols of the village goddess without taking into consideration which god they actually and obviously represent. In this way e. g. in a village two iconographically perfect sculptures of Viṣṇu and his consort Lakṣmī, which evidently originate from the ruin of a neighbouring temple, are worshipped as symbols of the Goddess Khambeśvarī with the appropriate cult. With reference to the fact that the idol of Viṣṇu obviously represents a male god, the priest merely shakes his head in wonder at the strangers who claim to know his goddess better than he himself does.

In these changes from sign to icon and vice versa the function of folk religion as the connecting link between tribal religion and "High Hinduism" becomes clear. As mentioned above, folk religion is not only a part in this historical continuum, but also a specific area in which the same appearances continue to arise spontaneously.

From this, folk religion appears to have an even further significance. In the history of Hinduism there have been repeated radical reform movements which have objected strongly to icons and temple cults. Their struggle was most probably directed against the solid and overwhel-



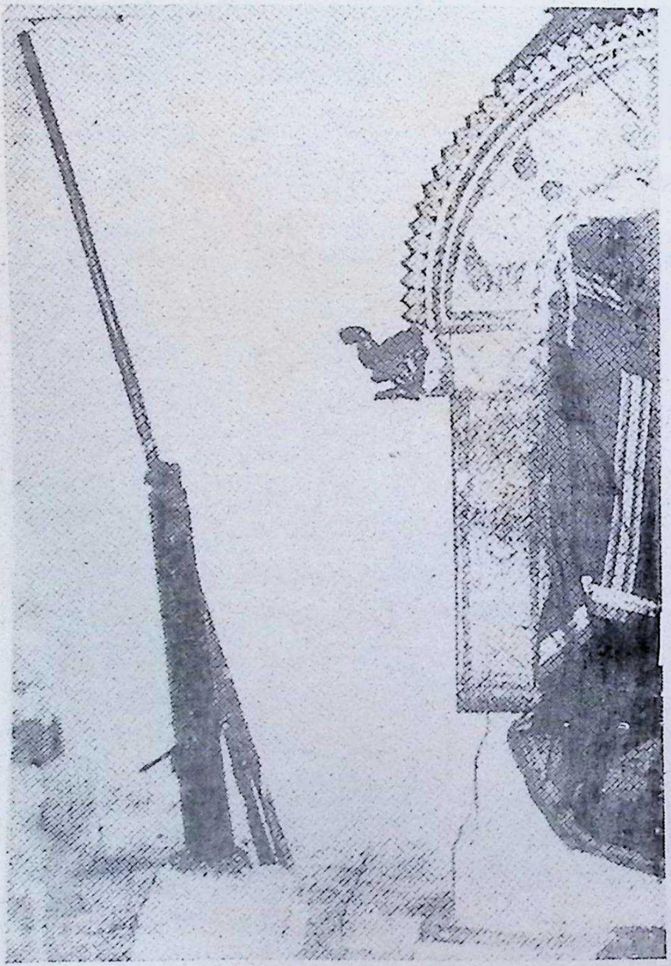
No. 3. The priest, a **mālī,** worshipping the. Door-Attendant' (**dvārapāla**) of a Kambheśvarī shrine.



No. 4. A 'possessed' medium answering the questions of the lady sitting left behind the door.

No. 5.

A Brahmin and a tribal priest both of whom work together in a Khambheśvarī Temple near Sonepur in West Orissa.



No. 6.

A portable wooden staff serves as **Utsava-mūrti** (cult image for use in outdoor festivals) and is worshipped daily along with the main cult image in the Samalai Temple at Sonepur.

ming forms, which made it appear as if God could be worshipped and experienced *only* through icons. The reform movements emphasised that every human being has direct access to God, regardless of caste and without being assigned to perform intricate rituals. Thus, every icon cult was often directly prohibited. Generally such movements arose out of folk religion or initially spread themselves to the greatest extent in this area. Furthermore, social reasons certainly played no unimportant role. Nevertheless, at first sight it always appears strange that it is precisely folk religion which is supposed to have borne the protest against vivid, concrete, directly accessible, icon worship. It certainly becomes understandable when one considers that it is exactly in folk religion that signs *and* icon are worshipped side by side. One function of the sign and its cult obviously appears to be, to constantly show the relativity of the icon cult.*

---

*Translated from German. The title of the original article is: *Zeichen und Bild, Zur Symbolik der indischen Volksreligion* which has appeared in the Journal *Symbolon*, New Series, Vol. 3, Köln 1975.

ADDENDUM

THE IDEA OF PURITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN HINDUISM

by

DR. G. C. TRIPATHI
Allahabad

śauce yatnaḥ sadā kāryo
　　śaucamūlo yato dvijaḥ/
śaucācāravihīnasya
　　samastā niṣphalāḥ kriyāḥ//

—Nīlakaṇṭha in *Ācāramayūkha*

> "One should perpetually aspire for purity since the very basis for the existence of a twice-born is purity. The one who is devoid of purity of character and thought and is bereft of an ethical conduct, all the meritorious acts performed by him are of no avail."

It is a universally acknowledged fact that the basic purpose and motive of a Religion is to contribute towards the overall refinement of the personality of a human being. A society without religious values is crude, unpolished and unaccomplished. It is through ethical norms and moral values prescribed by a Religion that a human being attains sophistication, intellectual eminence and spiritual development. Religion imparts lustre and splendour to the crude human souls.

It is, therefore, natural that every religion should lay stress on the observance of "purity"—purity in the widest sense of the term, since it is the purity which leads one from crudeness to refinement and which makes a person noble and divine. Every religion starts from the postulate that the human being as such and the set-up in which he lives, are—at least potentially, if not basically—impure and as such he should endeavour to become relatively pure by observing certain ethical norms and a prescribed code of conduct. We have in Christianity the famous doctrine of the transmission of primordial sin committed by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden which attaches itself to every human being born on this earth. Living with this irremovable and indestructible sin one is bound to be condemned to the tortures of hell unless one accepts Jesus Christ as his Spiritual leader and Redeamer who has atoned for his sin in advance through his death long ago. Thus by accepting Jesus Christ as his Prophet and Preceptor one is relieved of the impurity of the Original sin which makes his spiritual elevation possible.

1. *THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF PURITY AND THE SAMSKĀRAS*

Though a human being is not considered to be basically impure from the very birth in Hinduism, yet for a Hindu the journey of his life is a constant search for purity and refinement. He may not be impure at his birth, but he is crude and unrefined and becomes refined and polished through the religious discipline and training. One of the most frequent concepts occuring in the Ṛgveda is that of Purity (cf. the expressions: *śuci, śukra, pūta, pāvaka, pavitra, śundhāmi*, etc.), purity in connection with the various elements of the Universe and in connection with individual being. The Mahābhārata speaks of and lays strong stress on the purity of thought (*Manas*), speech (*Vacas*) and Action (*Karman*) and their mutual harmony. The idea of purity in the personality of a human being is however best reflected in the institution of *Saṃskāras*, which are sixteen in number and which a Hindu has to undergo since his coming into being till his death.

The word *Saṃskāra* means refinement, chastity or purity. The very act of conception, the formation of foetus and beginning of life, is a 'Saṃskāra' for a Hindu. The Dharmaśāstras prescribe elaborately the rites and ritual to be performed by the future parents of a child and the Mantras that a mating couple, especially the husband has to utter before and while uniting himself with his wife. The protection and purification of the foetus is guaranteed through the pre-natal Saṃskāras like *Puṃsavana* and *Sīmantonnayana* whereas the purificatory rites involved in the Saṃskāra of *Jātakarma* ensure a flawless and immaculate beginning of a human life. The Saṃskāras like *Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana* and *Cūḍākarma*, etc. express the affection of the parents towards their child on the one hand and on the other, mark the physical growth and gradual maturity of the child, whereas the Saṃskāras of *Upanayana* and *Vedārambha* are prominent landmarks in his mental and spiritual depelopment. *Upanayana* especially, is the Saṃskāra which imparts the status of *'twice-born'* (*dvija*) to a high-caste Hindu and makes him entitled to receive spiritual training from his Preceptor.

Since the rite of marriage makes one entitled in conjunction with his wife to perform the sacred duties of a household, it is considered to be a *sacrament* too and lastly the *Antyeṣṭi* seeks to purify the dead body from its wordly impurities and defilement through death and the person whose body is consigned to flames is believed to ascend to heaven with a radiant body.[1]

According to *Parāśara Smṛti* the performance of Saṃskāras gradually brings out or unfolds the spiritual capabilities of a human being in the way the application of various colours unfold or bring out the individual characteristics of a motif in the painting:

citrakarma yathānekair
angair unmīlyate śanaiḥ/
brāhmaṇyam api tad vat syāt
saṃskāravidhipūrvakam//

The famous philosopher Śaṃkara acknowledges *twofold* purposes of a Saṃskāra: it may aim at removing the taints, blemishes or sins and it may bring about or generate eligibility to perform certain religious acts. All the Saṃskāras serve either or both of these two purposes:

Saṃskāro nāma guṇādhānena vā syāt doṣāpanayanena vā/

According to Śankara, the Saṃskāras thus have the potentiality of removing supposed taints incurred in this or inherited from previous births and of generating such qualities as lead to self-development and perfection. The *Tantravārttika* of Kumarila also supports the definition of Śankara by stating that the eligibility (or *Yogyatā*) acquired through a Saṃskāra is generated through the removal of blemishes or impurities on the one hand and through the positive acquisition of additional merits and qualities on the other :

---

[1] Cf. Ṛgveda 10.14.8:
hitvāya vadyaṃ punar astam ehi
saṃ gacchasva tanvā suvarcāḥ/

> *Yogyatā ca sarvatra dviprakārā, doṣāpanayena*
> *guṇāntaropārjanena ca bhavati* /

The later authorities on Dharmaśāstra, e.g. Mitra Miśra, the famous writer of *Vīramitrodaya*, an encyclopaedic work on Dharmaśāstra composed in the first half of 17th century in Orchha near Jhansi, also endorses the view of Śankara and Kumarila, the Vedantist and the Mīmānsaka, on the concept of Saṃskāra. According to Mitra Miśra, Saṃskāra is that peculiar *excellence* due to the performance of rites (ordined by the Śāstra) which resides either in the soul or the body and has the two-fold function of either generating eligibility to perform further meritorious actions (e.g. *Upanayana*) or removing the evil taints that may have been attached to a person (e. g. *Jātakarma*)—

> *tatrātma-śarīrānyataraniṣṭho vihitakriyājanyo'-*
> *tiśayaviśeṣaḥ saṃskāraḥ* /
> *sa ca dvividhaḥ* / *ekas tāvat karmāntarādhikāre'-*
> *nukūlaḥ, aparas tūtpannena duritamātranāśakaḥ* //

It may thus be observed that the Saṃskāras are religious *purificatory* rites and ceremonies for *sanctifying* the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he may become a full-fledged member of the community. However, the purpose of the Saṃskāras does not end with the formal purification of the body but also extends further and there are a number of rites accompanying regulations and observances which aim at sanctifying, impressing, refining and perfecting the entire individuality of the recepient.

2. *SAMDHYĀ : THE EARLY MORNING PURIFICATORY RITE*

The two basic purposes of removing the taints or sins and acquiring spiritual eligibility to communicate with the Divine are also reflected in the Hindu rite of Saṃdhyā which a pious Hindu is enjoined to perform at least twice a day at the dawn and the dusk. It may be noted that the Saṃdhyā is a purely Vedic rite and the only Vedic rite which has survived even to this day amidst the highly embellished Hinduistic/Brahmanic ritual of the Post-Vedic and medieval ages. The initial act of Saṃdhyā is that of *ācamana* or sipping of water thrice to the accompaniment of certain Mantras since the waters are considered to be the best purifying agents. The waters thus sipped purify the body from inside. The worshipper then seeks to purify his whole person by meditating upon Viṣṇu and uttering the famous Mantra : *'apavitraḥ pavitro vā......'*. A prayer is then addressed to the goddess of Earth who is requested to purify the seat of the worshipper. The worshipper then utters the Vedic *Aghamarṣaṇa* Mantra (*Ṛtam ca satyaṃ ca....*) which aims at wiping out the sins (*aghamarṣana*). Thereafter the worshipper performs Prāṇayāma or the regulation of breath about which it is said in the Tantras that the Prāṇāyāṃa purifies the body by the following process : The Air is the source of Fire and the Fire is the source of Waters (cf. Taittirīya Up. II.1; *Vāyor-agniḥ [sambhūtaḥ], agner āpaḥ*). By holding Air in the internal cavity of body, Fire is generated which gives birth to Waters in its turn. The inner part of the human body is thus purified through three Elements which are the purifiers *par excellence* namely the Air (cf. the attribute *pavana* for air which means 'purifier') the Fire and the Waters :

prāṇavāyau dhṛte dehe
vāyor agniḥ prajāyate/
agner āpaḥ prajāyante
tato'ntaḥ śudhyate tribhiḥ//

After muttering the Gāyatrī the worshipper again sips water uttering the prayer that may the gods Sun and *Manyu* protect him from sinful acts committed in the fury of anger. The sinful acts committed by him in the previous night through his mind, speech, hand, feet, belly or male-organ may be destroyed by the Night itself (i. e., by the purifying agent *'Time'*). He further declares that he is pouring his miseries and misdeeds into the Sun, the shining immortal light of the sky. He then sprinkles his body nine times with the nine feet of the three Gāyatrī stanzas (a metre which contains three feet). The Mantras are directed towards Waters and beseach them to bestow vitality and sap of life upon the worshipper. The final sprinkling is done by the worshipper on his forehead while he utters a verse unto the waters praying that he may be relieved of his sins in the manner the snake is relieved of its old skin, or as the person taking bath is relieved of his bodily perspiration or the ghee is clarified when poured through a sieve. Thereupon he again performs the rite of Aghamarṣaṇa (destruction of sins) using the above quoted Mantra of the Yajurveda.

After thus purifying himself of his likely sins and faults the worshipper seeks to attain the immortal divine light by meditating upon God Savitṛ, the presiding Deity of Sāvitrī, the foremost of the Vedic Mantras. The Deity represents spiritual effulgence, Glory and immortality, cf.

ud vayaṃ tamasas pari
svaḥ paśyanta uttaram/
devam devatrā sūryam
aganma jyotir uttamam//

The prayer culminates in the utterance of the Gāyatrī Mantra in which the worshipper requests the Divine Light of God to lead his thoughts towards noble goals.

3. *PŪJĀ–THE RE-CREATION OF A PURE SELF*

Destruction of impurity and attainment or visualisation of the Divine Light are also the basic motives of Hindu Pūjā. Its basic objective is to worship the Divine by rising to the plane or the level of the Deity. The body of the worshipper is considered to be far too impure to approach the Divinity. Hence the mundane body is destroyed in the course of meditation and an utterly new body created following the process of the evolution of the world. This new body may look similar to the older body of the worshipper but in its substance it is entirely different from the older one. The five great elements which form the basic material of the body are re-created and reassembled to give birth to a new body. The whole process is known as *Bhūtaśuddhi* or the "purification of elements".

It may perhaps not be out of place to describe this process in short as taking place in the daily Pūjā ceremony of a Hindu :

The worshipper first meditates upon his heart in the form of an eight-petalled lotus which has *Bliss* (ānanda) for its roots and *knowledge* (Jñāna) for its stalk etc. He takes the [qualified] individual soul (jīvātman) resting on the pericarp of this lotus and shining like the flame of a lamp, through the Suṣumṇā channel to the thousand petalled lotus in the head and unites it with the 'Highest Soul' i. e. God present there, uttering the Mantra *'Haṃsaḥ'* (=*ahaṃ saḥ* / i. e. I am He).

While the Jīvātman thus rests with Paramātman or the 'Highest Soul', he dissolves the different elements of his body into their Causes, and these Causes into their primordial Causes and so on in the following manner. He merges first the Earth into Water, the Water into the Fire, the Fire into the Wind, the Wind into the Space and the Space into the lower form of Ahaṃkāra (I-Consciousness). The organs of sense as well as of action together with their objects (*viṣaya*) are merged into the middle form of Ahaṃkāra and the mental faculties into the highest form of Ahaṃkāra. The Ahaṃkāra in its entirety is then merged into Mahat (Intelligence) and Mahat into Prakṛti—The primordial Nature. Finally the worshipper even merges Nature into the Highest Soul which has its seat in the thousand-petalled lotus of the head.

The body and the soul of the worshipper now rest with Paramātman in their substance. What remains is the *pāpapuruṣa*—the accumulated sins conceived as a tiny, black human figure—which originally had its seat in the lower left part of the belly of the worshipper. With the Mantra of Wind (*yaṃ*) the worshipper dries him up and with that of Fire (*raṃ*) he burns him down to ashes. He then exhales his ashes through his nostrils.

The worshipper now meditates upon the Mantra of Water (*vaṃ*) resting in the middle of the crescent situated in the head and with the help of this Mantra as well as the holy syllable Oṃ, he lets a stream of ambrosia consisting of the sounds of speech of Mātṛkā (=Mothers, so called because they are believed to generate the whole universe) fall down on the elements of his body which exist in their germinal state. With this rain all the elements are purified. He now meditates upon the Mantra of Earth (*laṃ*) and creates a Golden Egg. With the help of Praṇava (Oṃ) used as a 'sword', so to say, he splits this Egg horizontally into two pieces. The upper portions of this Egg is conceived as the sky and the lower-half the earth. On this 'earth' he now brings down all the elements of his body which have been resting with Paramātman and re-creates his body in the order in which the creation of the universe proceeds (according to the theory of Sāṃkhya), viz. Highest Soul–Nature–Intelligence–I-consciousness–Space and so forth. When the 24 elements (*tattvas*) have been restored to their proper places, he brings down his individual soul (Jīvātman) with the help of Kuṇḍalinī and places it in the lotus of his heart.

The next rite performed by the worshipper is that of Prāṇapratiṣṭhā (establishment of vital Energies) which aims at endowing this divine body of the worshipper with the vital breaths, the sense-organs and blood, flesh, strength etc. The Prāṇapratiṣṭhā is performed with the help of a

Mantra, the different letters of which are associated with the different substances in the body.

Taking Kuśa grass and some flowers in his hand and showing a particular hand-gesture he touches his head with the right hand and utters the Mantra for Prāṇapratiṣṭhā which is followed by the prayer; "let my prāṇas (residing in the old body) be now here (in this new body); all my organs should now be here; let my speech. Mind etc. come and live here comfortably for long".

The worshipper then performs Prāṇāyāma (regulation of breaths) for the further purification of his body. As observed earlier, it is believed that the holding of breath (=Air) in the body gives rise to Fire which in turn generates Water and thus the body is purified with these three elements.

The devotee now places the various aspects or forms of his Deity together with the Śaktis ('energies, i. e. female consorts) of these aspects on the different parts of his body in order to achieve a closer affinity with the Deity.

The body of the devotee thus endowed with the different aspects of the deity is still considered to be an abstract and 'unqualified' (nirguṇa) one. In order to impart it a qualified character the twenty-four *tattvas* of the Sāṃkhya philosophy which go into the making of the mundane world, viz., the five basic elements (space etc.), the organs of sense, the organs of action, the objects of the organs of sense (śabda etc.) the mind (manas), ego (ahaṃkāra), intellect (buddhi), prāṇa (vital breaths) and jīva (=Puruṣa) combined with the four Pāñcarātric emanations of the 'Highest Puruṣa' (Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and

Aniruddha) as well as a few others are placed on the different parts of the body. The rite is known as *Tattva-Nyāsa*. At long last, now the body of the worshipper becomes free of its impurities and is worthy of worshipping the Lord from the same level. But it is still to be deified and given the character of the Deity which takes place through the various Nyāsas.

I am not going to describe here the lengthy process of Pūjā. It suffices for our purpose to bear in mind that not only the body of the worshipper but such objects as the Image on which the worship is to be carried out; further, the Mantras and the Deity are also the objects which need first be ritually purified. The water which is used in Pūjā, the utensils, the articles to be offered in Pūjā and especially the food of the Naivedya is also to undergo a strict process of purification before it could be offered to the Deity.

The Hindu Pūjā is a purificatory act through and through. It enhances the spiritual status of an earthly human-being and makes him eligible to communicate with the Divine. The purification of the body of the worshipper is considered absolutely necessary since it is from the heart of this body that the Light or Effulgence of the Divine comes out through the nostrils of the worshipper and enters into the Image through its cerebral cavity. It is thus the Divine Light present in the heart of the worshipper which is first visualised and then transferred temporarily into the Image which is worshipped, so to say, by the same light in a subject-object relationship.

4. *PURITY: THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA BEHIND ALL DHARMAŚĀSTRIC INJUNCTIONS*

The idea of Śuddhi, that of purification, is indeed of paramount importance in almost all the religious rites of Hinduism: Be it, for example's sake, the construction of a new building, which cannot be initiated without carrying out the rite of *'bhūmiśuddhi'* (the purification of site), or taking of a bride, who is made pure by recitation of Vedic Mantras before being finally accepted as wife. The whole world of a Hindu is permeated with the notion of purity and impurity. The question of purity and the notion of *being pure* and *remaining pure* is of paramount importance to a Hindu. It is an obsession with him. A Hindu is so strongly pre-occupied with this notion that most of his time during the days is spent for either acquiring or preserving his ritual purity. The texts of the Dharmaśāstras give exact injunctions as to the purificatory rites to be performed from morning till evening. At what time a person should get up, what are the atonements (*prāyascittas*) if he does not get up before Sunrise, what verses he should utter while still sitting in bed, what verse should he utter while putting his first step down on earth, how should he rinse his mouth and sip water, how should he attend to the call of nature, in what way should he purify himself, how should he clean his teeth and ultimately take a morning bath etc. etc. are all described in great detail in an exceedingly intricate manner in the Dharmaśāstras. The rite of morning Pūjā forms a separate chapter in these texts so also the various injunctions and prohibitions regarding the food. What is to be eaten, what not to be eaten, what can be eaten by a particular Varṇa etc., is extensively described. There is a list of animals whose meat is prohibited and a list of vegetable which are not to be eaten by particular groups in the society. The articles like garlic, onions, meat, sometimes even carrots and radishes are deemed to be impure and are prohibited for certain groups, especially the students and mendicants.

Though a number of Dharmaśāstras say that *Janana* and *Maraṇa*—the birth and the death—are the two main pollution-causing occasions for a householder,[2] it seems that the prohibitions and injunctions connected with cooking and eating the food have acquired the utmost predominence these days. Every one of us is conversant with a set of rules governing the purity of food. Cooked food is not taken out of kitchen in an orthodox Hindu family. It is partaken of inside the kitchen. There is always someone who *serves* the food to the person taking the food because the person eating is not allowed to touch the remaining cooked food lest it should become *ucchiṣṭa* ('leftover')—a concept so typical of Hindu society that it defies proper translation. There are a number of Brahmins who are *Svayampākins,* i. e. they take only that food which they themselves or their wives have cooked. The Kānyakubja Brahmins do not even take the food cooked by another Brahmin. There goes a saying that eight Kānyakubjas require nine herds or ovens to cook their food (*āṭha kanaujiā nau cūlhe*). And there have been some strange but

---

[2] *janane maraṇe nityam*
āśaucam anudhāvati/
sapiṇḍān mātṛbandhūṃś ca
yatra kvacana gacchataḥ//

—Devala as quoted in the *Nirṇayasindhu* well known cases in Uttar Pradesh in which a Brahmin married to, or keeping, a lower-caste woman cooks his own food every day till the end of his life though both live like husband and wife and have children together. None of the world-religions intrude and interfere into the personal affairs of a human being so much as the Hinduism does. Strong regementation at the personal and social level and absolute freedom at the spiritual and metaphysical level, is the hallmark of Hinduism. The other world-religions like Christianity and Islam do not restrict the private life of their followers, but they are absolutely strict about the observance of their sets of beliefs—their commandments or dogmas—and do not brook even the slightest variation therein.

5. *LIBERAL OUTLOOK OF THE DHARMAŚĀSTRAS DURING THE MEDIEVAL AGE*

A society, when it comes into contact with an alien culture, as happened to the Indian Society in the medieval ages, clings and sticks even more strongly to its patterns of behaviour, social norms and injunctions, since it feels insecure. Whatever norms and habits are prevalent during these difficult times are zealously guarded since the people are afraid of losing their identity. This fact leads to the petrification or fossilisation of those sets of rules which are prima facie not the *essential* part of the beliefs of that Religion. This seems to have happened to the present day Hinduism also, in which the rules of Purity and Impurity alone haunt the mind of Hindus. The Dharmaśāstras on the other hand are not only liberal but also practical in framing their sets of rules about purity. To give a few examples : A cotton cloth is pure till it remains on the body ; as soon as it is put off, it becomes impure and has to be washed. The silk garment is considered to be ritually pure till the time it is washed. The woolen garment, however, is considered to be ritually pure in a permanent manner. It gets purified by being exposed to the sunshine.

The Nirṇayasindhu clearly says that milk, curd, honey, clarified butter, raw suger and fruits etc. are not defiled even with the touch of Śūdras or Cāṇḍālas. Even cooked food seen by persons not entitled to do so, may be purified if one sprinkles clarified butter on it. Food stuff that has been touched by monkeys, dogs, goats, cats, crows etc. should be cast off according to a general rule, but Hārīta allows their consumption after they have been washed with water in which precious metal or jewels have been immersed and after one has taken a piece of flaming Kuśa around them. If a large heap of food is contaminated, a small portion may be thrown out and the rest purified. Baudhāyana specifies the Mantras to be recited in the rite of purification. Food exceeding the quantity of a *droṇa,* if defiled by touch of a crow or dog, need not be thrown away but can be purified. The rules of contact-impurity do not apply (even to food), in festivals, in places of pilgrimage, during marriage festivities, when their is a conflagration, in battle and during riots or rebellion. The question of Purity and Impurity need not be raised in cowstalls, oil mills, sacrificial halls or where children, sick, infirm and disables are involved. A bird is pure when it makes a fruit fall by pecking at it. A suckling calf does not pollute the udders of the mother-cow nor a hound catching a deer. The whole of a woman's body is pure at love-games and even otherwise the women are considered to be pure in their entire body—except in menses—whereas a man is pure only upto his navel and not below. Meet bought from a Cāṇḍāla or slaughterer is not impure and so also the flies, mosquitos and bees do not carry any impurity to any edible object. The cooked food collected as alms is pure even though seen by impure eyes on the street. Ones bed, seat and shoes are always pure to him but impure to others. One may use them again and again without having them washed. A woolen blanket, cows, horses, raindrops, moths and parrots are always pure. Even the impure objects can be purified if they are brought in touch with Air, Water and Fire, the purifiers *par-excellence.* These elements themselves are not considered to be permanently free from pollution, yet when pure, they impart and transfer their purity upon other objects.

The Dharmaśāstras also take due note of the personal convenience and inconvenience of an individual while prescribing rules for purity/impurity. One is advised to observe the injunctions about purity/impurity etc. in letter and spirit only so long as he is at his own home. He may drop half of them if he is living in the house of someone else as his guest. To fulfil the commitments of his job (lit. 'service at the royal court'), he may further drop another half of them (i. e. should observe only one-fourth of the rules, only the most important ones) and in case one is travelling and is underway he may forget all injunctions about purity and impurity and is free to behave like a Śūdra :

svagṛhe paramācāraḥ
tadardhaṃ paraveśmani/
tadardham rājasevāyām
pathi śūdravad ācaret//

The Dharmaśāstras hold an astonishingly liberal view with regard to women. Since a women is free from impurity by nature,[3] she cannot be contaminated even if taken by force and her modesty outraged. A number of authorities have been cited in the Nirṇayasindhu (17th c.) to substantiate the view that a women should not be abondoned on that account. Even if she is pregnant, she becomes pure after delivering the child. The stigma of impurity attaches itself to the child but not to the mother. If she is not pregnant she becomes absolutely pure with her next menses. The Nirṇayasindhu discusses the view and cites authorities to support that even if a married woman conceives through a person other than her husband she is not to be abondoned.

It is a well known fact that the Vedic literature contains Mantras and rites to purify groups of people and to incorporate them in the Society of the Aryans. The famous rite of *Vrātyastoma* in the *Tāṇḍya M. Br.* is meant to be used for the purification of the Vrātyas when they desire to be taken into Aryan fold. The Arabs ruling over Sindh converted a number of Hindus into Muslims in the 8th century. The Smṛti writer Devala writing in 9th-10th c. A.D. liberally ordains that a [previous] Brahmin can be purified and taken back into his caste even if he has become a *Mleccha* by performing *Cāndrāyaṇa* and *Parāka* rites. The injunctions and rules about purity-impurity etc. do not seem to have been so rigid upto the end of the first millenium A.D. It is the onslaught of the alien Islamic culture in the 12th century and later with no regard for the concept of Ritual Purity of the Hindus which made the Hindu society capsule itself in a sort of water-tight compartment and attach an overrated importance to Ritual Purity. The Ritual Purity thus became the chief, if not the sole characteristic of medieval Hinduism.

---

[3] This purity and sanctity (*medhyatvam*) is said to have been imparted to them by Soma and Pāvaka (fire, *lit.* purifier) respectively who live in their body; cf.:

somaś cāsāṃ dadau śaucaṃ
gandharvaśca śubhāṃ giram/
pāvakaḥ sarvamedhyatvaṃ
tasmān medhyāḥ sadā striyaḥ//

Yajñavalkya Smṛti, III.71

6. *THE PRESENT RIGIDITY OF THE INJUNCTIONS OF PURITY*

There is no doubt as to the fact that the institution of 'untouchability' in Hindu society has its origin in the exaggerated importance attached to the sense of Ritual Purity. The persons persuing some unclean professions are considered to be inherently impure even though they may be physically absolutely clean. It has also played an important role in building up the system of four *Varṇas* or castes in which the ritually purer one is considered to be superior in social status to the one who is relatively impure. It was unimaginable till before the beginning of the 20th century to take back into Hinduistic fold a person who has once embraced Christianity or Islam. There are several examples in the medieval history of India and in the history of Orissa to illustrate this. King Ramachandradeva of Khurdha, the foremost Sevaka of Lord Jagannātha, who was interned in Cuttack and was converted to Islam was not taken back into Hinduistic fold though his forefathers had re-established the Temple of Jagannātha and he himself had faught valiantly against the Muslims for upholding the dignity of Lord Jagannātha. He was considered as *patita* or "fallen" for the rest of his life and was denied entry into the Temple which his forefathers had brought back to life. The maximum concession that the priests of the Temple could give him, was to paint a picture of Lord Jagannātha for him at the entrance-gate of the Temple where he could have his daily *darśana* of the Lord. In fact, it may even be possible that King Ramachandradeva had actually never been converted to Islam. However, since he had to stay in the fort of Cuttack, with a number of Muslim attendants and servants, there was sufficient *a priori* ground to *presume* that Ramachandradeva had embraced Islam and, therefore, to deny him entry into the Temple on that account. Similarly, a number of Muslims approached Mahārājā Ranvir Singh, the ruler of Kashmir towards the end of the previous century and expressed their desire to return to the religion of their forefathers in the Kashmir Valley. The Mahārājā consulted the Pandits of Kashmir and especially of Kashi (Benaras) who unanimously gave the decree that there is *no* provision for re-conversion of the *Mlecchas* back into Hinduism! The Mahārājā expressed his inability to the eager Muslims and there it remained—with all those grave and far-reaching political consequences for India.

Such examples may be infinitely multiplied. The Hinduism has been reluctant even to take back its women folk which has been forcefully carried away by Muslims, for example, during the partition days, then deserted and which would very much like to come back to their original religious fold. This happens today in spite of the explicit rulings of the Dharmaśāstras that women should not be considered as impure in such cases. The efforts of Mālavīyas and Dayānandas do not seem to have changed the mentality of the people.

In fact, the self-portrait of a Hindu is that of a pious, ritually clean and pure person. He finds this view constantly strengthened and corroborated when he contrasts himself with the members of other communities around him who do not observe according to him the rules of Purity. In his own world-view it is a special privilege for him to be a Hindu. *It is an élite community of the pure ;* refined through *Samskāras* and clean through the observance of the injunctions of purity/impurity. If a person becomes impure by contracting excessive impurity, crossing a certain permissible limit, he is to be ex-communicated, turned out of this fold ; so that the purity of the community as a whole could be guarded and protected.

7. *THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF THESE NOTIONS*

This is a system of immediate surgery, the system of operating out the injured or damaged part lest it should effect the rest of the healthy body, rather than of trying to heal it up. It is obvious that in such a world-view there can never be any place for missionary activities, i. e. for efforts to win new souls and to increase one's own community. There is hardly any channel open for a non-Hindu individual to become a Hindu even if he believes in the philosophical principles, taught and propagated by Hinduism. For medieval and modern Hinduism it is not the philosophy that matters but the *Ācāra,* the way of leading your life under observance of all injunctions and prohibitions about Ritual Purity and Impurity. I do not know whether the staunchest followers of *Hare Krishna* Movements, for example, would ever be accepted as equals in Hindu society even if they lived long in India. The only way open is naturalisation or assimilation of a whole group or community through prolonged contact with Hindu society which results in the adoption of Hindu manners and customs—and of course also, if not primarily—the Hindu notions about purity and impurity. In such a case the originally alien community becomes so similar to the Hindu society that it passes for Hindu and ultimately passes over unnoticeably to the Hindu society, becoming an integral part of it mostly in the form of a sub-caste under Varṇāśrama system. A number of tribes have thus been taken over silently into Hinduism and Orissa can furnish perhaps the best examples of such sort because here the 'classical', the 'tribal' and the 'intermediary' groups are still existing side by side. This is also the way in which a sizable number of Buddhists of Bengal and Orissa have slowly been converted into Hinduism. Nothing would be farther from truth than to say that Buddhism was forcibly driven away from this country by the Ācāryas like Śankara or wiped out by fanatic Hindu sovereigns from this land. In fact, the Buddhism, through acculturization i. e. through adoption of Tantric practices and through acceptance of Hindu manners and customs came so near to Hinduism and became so similar to it that at a certain point it became impossible to distinguish between the two. I may add here that it was not solely the case of Buddhism coming nearer to Hinduism. The Hinduism also certainly adopted a number of Buddhist practices and thus came forward out of its citadel to receive Buddhism half way. But when there is a meeting of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, it is the Gaṅgā which retains the name whereas the identity of Yamunā is lost.

The modern western ideology of egalitarianism and secularism has posed a number of challenges before Hinduism. So much so that an orthodox Hindu feels embarrassed and non-plussed at every step and finds himself out of place in the modern urban society because he cannot observe his rules of purity/impurity in the present set-up, rules which are so near and dear to his heart and which he has all along considered as the fundamental part of his creed. There is no common strategy from the side of Hindus to meet this challenge. Some stick to the traditional rules of purity even more vehemently; some conveniently and openly flaut such rules or mock at them as 'backwardness' and the majority follows the middle path being flexible in its approach and interpretation making adjustments and concessions. There is no doubt as to the fact that the injunctions of ritual purity or impurity cannot be preserved or upheld for too long a time in modern India. It remains to be seen whether the Hindu society fills up this widening vacuum with philosophical and spiritual content acceptable to all—since till now this was only a dormant factor in Hinduism whereas the rules about purity/impurity were the dominant factors—or it crumbles and disintegrates as a religious community, in order to—hopefully—resurrect as a re-formed, reformed, community with a re-defined code of ethics and a code of conduct.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY ANNCHARLOTT ESCHMANN

1. "Typen der Erlösung–Bericht von der religionsgeschichtlichen Studienkonferenz in Jerusalem vom 14. bis 19. Juli 1968." In : *Kairos. Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie,* 1968, pp. 286-288. (Report on a Conference on Religious Studies held at Jerusalem, 14.7.–19.7.1968).

2. "Die Funktion der Geschichte im religiösen Weltbild Altmexikos." In : *Verhandlungen des XXXVIII Internationalen Amerikanistenkongresses,* 1968, vol. II, München 1970, pp. 353-359. [The Function of History in the Religious Worldview of Old Mexico].

3. "Die Samaritaner. 2700 Jahre Glaubensgeschichte zwischen Judentum, Christentum und Islam." In : *Gehört-Gelesen; Manuskriptauslese der interessantesten Sendungen des Bayerischen Rundfunks,* No. 1, January 1970, pp. 58-65. [The Samaritans. 2700 Years of their Religious History amongst Judaism, Christianity and Islam].

4. "Spread, Organisation and Cult of Mahimā Dharma." In : *An Inter-Disciplinary Seminar on Mahimā Dharma and Darshan,* ed. by D. Panda. Koraput 1972, pp. 7-11.

5. "Der Avatāragedanke im Hinduismus des Neunzehnten und Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts." In : *Numen. International Review for the History of Religions,* vol. XIX Fasc. 2-3,

1972, pp. 229-240. Off-print No. 126 of the Southasia Institute, Heidelberg. [The Concept of Avatāra in Hinduism of the 19th and 20th Centuries].

6. "Mahimā Dharma, eine autochthone hinduistische Reformbewegung." In : *Die hinduistische Tradition und ihre Bedeutung in der gegenwärtigen Entwicklungsphase Indiens. Eine interdisziplinäre Analyse, durchgeführt am Beispiel der Tempelstadt Puri in Orissa.* Zwischenbericht des Orissa Projektes 1972, pp. 1-48. [Mahimā Dharma, an Autochthonous Hindu Reform Movement. Article in the first Intermediary Report of the Orissa Research Project, 1972, cyclostyled]. See also No. 21.

7. "The Role of Hindu Tradition in Contemporary India : An Interdisciplinary Study of the Temple City of Puri and the Jagannātha Cult." In : *Bulletin of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg, University* 1973, pp. 92-99.

8. "Religion, Reaction and Change : The Role of Sects in Hinduism." In : *Religion and Development in Asian Societies,* Colombo (Marga Publications) 1974. pp. 143-157.

9. (Ed.) *Religion in Modern Indian Literature* (=Southasian Digest of Regional Writing, vol. III), Heidelberg 1974, 128 p.

10. "Religion and Religions in Modern Hinduism", in No. 9, pp. 2-20.

11. "Mahimā Dharma." In : *Āsantā Kāli,* XXV, Oct. 1974, pp. 89-94.

12. "Hinduism and Tribal Religion. The Origin of the Jagannātha Cult." (Unpublished lecture delivered at the

XIII International Congress for the History of Religions. Lancester. August 1975.

13. "Zeichen und Bild: Zur Symbolik der indischen Volksreligion." In: *Symbolon. Jahrbuch für Symbolforschung*, N. F., vol. III, 1975, pp. 15-36. (Sign and Icon, Symbolism in Indian Folk Religion), see No. 22.

14. "Jātiprathā aur samanvaya." In: Dinmān, 18–24.4. 1976.

15. *Das religiöse Geschichtsbild der Azteken.* (=Indiana, Separate Issue No. 4), Berlin 1976, 371 p. [Ph. D. Thesis].

16. (Ed.) *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa.* Ed. by A. Eschmann, J. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi. (=South Asian Studies No. VIII), New Delhi 1978, 536 p., 74 plates, 8 maps.

17. "Hinduization or Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Śaiva Typology." In: No. 16, pp. 79-97.

18. "The Vaiṣṇava Typology of Hinduization and the Origin of Jagannātha." In: No. 16, pp. 99-117.

19. (Together with H. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi) "The Formation of the Jagannātha Triad." In: No. 16, pp. 169-196.

20. "Prototypes of the Navakalevara Ritual and their Relation to the Jagannātha Cult." In: No. 16, pp. 265-283. Republished: *Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa*, ed. by M. N. Das, Cuttack 1977, pp. 386-408.

21. "Mahimā Dharma. An Autochthonous Hindu Reform Movement." In: No. 16, pp. 375-410 (translation of No. 6).

22. "Sign and Icon: Symbolism in the Indian Folk Religion." In: *Religion and Society in Eastern India*: Anncharlott Eschmann Memoiral Lectures, Vol. I, ed. by G. C. Tripathi and H. Kulke, Bhubaneswar 1987 (translation of No. 13).

G.NO 1445

294.5
T737r

[illegible]

Prof. Gaya Charan Tripathi, D. phil (Freiburg), D. Litt (Allahabad) has been the Field Director of the former Orissa Research Project and together with A. Eschmann and H. Kulke, co-editor of its final report Jagannath Cult and the Regional Tradition of Orissa. Presently he is Principal, Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Lucknow.

Prof. Hermann Kulke, Dr. phil in Indology (Freiburg) has been founder member of the former Orissa Research Project, presently he is Professor of South Asian History at Kiel University.